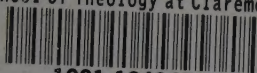
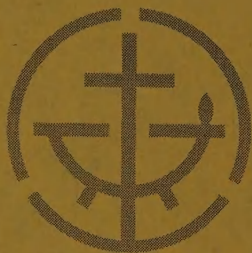


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CONCESSIONS OF "LIBERALISTS"

TO

ORTHODOXY.

BY

DANIEL DORCHESTER, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE
UNITED STATES," "PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS
PROGRESS," ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK :
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

This work was originally prepared as a course of lectures, and first delivered before the School of Theology of Boston University. The faculty most earnestly urged their publication, and passed the following resolution :

“ Resolved, That we tender our warmest thanks to Dr. Dorchester for the able course of lectures given recently before the School of Theology on the subject, “Concessions of Liberalists to Orthodoxy.” For the extensive research shown by him, as well as the skillful presentation of the three cardinal topics, he is worthy of all commendation. We think these lectures should be repeated before other Schools of Theology, and better yet be given to the larger Public by an immediate publication.”

The students of the School of Theology also passed the following resolution :

“ As a body of students, we take pleasure in giving expression to the interest we have felt in listening to the admirable lectures you have delivered before us. We are also of the opinion that they deserve a wider audience, as well as closer attention on our part. Permit us therefore to offer our unanimous request for their publication.”

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Col. Doster

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS.

THE TRUE CONSCIOUSNESS.

A BROAD FUNDAMENTAL CONCESSION.

A TEST PRINCIPLE OF GREAT TRUTHS.

BOOK FIRST.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

I. THE DOWNWARD SLIDE, ...	27
II. THE HUMANITARIAN CONCESSION, . . .	37
THE RADICAL HUMANITARIAN VIEW REJECTED,	40
THE COMMON HUMANITARIAN VIEW REJECTED,	51
III. THE ARIAN CONCESSION, ...	59
IV. THE SABELLIAN CONCESSION, ...	71
V. THE LOGOS CONCESSION, ...	87

VI. THE TRINITY CONCESSION,	103
I. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES CONCEDED,	104
1. Threefoldness in the Deity not absurdity,	105
2. The Trinity an old universal race truth,	107
3. Trinity in Unity rooted in the Indo-European Mind,	110
II. HIGHER CONCESSIONS,	112
1. Trinity in Unity not irrational,	112
2. The doctrine helpful,	115
3. The doctrine underlaid by great vital truth,	118
4. The doctrine eulogized,	123
5. The problem Liberalists have set for them- selves to solve,	124
VII. THE FINAL CONCESSION,	129
THE DEITY OF CHRIST, THE GREAT, SATISFYING, AND VITALIZING TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY,	129

BOOK SECOND.

THE ATONEMENT.

I. THE ISSUE,	137
II. THE EXPIATORY VIEW CONCEDED TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY SCRIPTURAL,	147
III. EXPIATION CONCEDED A GOVERNMENTAL NECESSITY,	153

CONTENTS.

7

	PAGE
IV. THE EXPIATORY VIEW CONCEDED A RADICAL MORAL NECESSITY, . . .	171
V. THE EXPIATORY VIEW CONCEDED A DEEP SPIRITUAL NECESSITY, . . .	179
VI. THE EXPIATORY SCHEME EULOGIZED, . . .	191

BOOK THIRD.

ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

I. FUTURE RETRIBUTION CONCEDED, . . .	201
GEHENNA THE PLACE OF FUTURE RETRIBUTION, . . .	226
II. THE FEARFULNESS OF FUTURE RETRI- BUTION CONCEDED, ...	233
III. THE THEOLOGICAL HYPOTHESIS OF UNI- VERSAL RESTORATION, NOT TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE, CONCEDED, ...	247
MEANING OF THE WORD <i>αἰώνιος</i> , ...	254
IV. THE PHILOSOPHICAL HYPOTHESIS OF UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, A MATTER OF GRAVEST DOUBT, CONCEDED, ...	265

TWELVE PROPOSITIONS.

PROP. 1.—THE HYPOTHESIS CONTRARY TO NATURAL THEOLOGY, ...	266
PROP. 2.—THE HYPOTHESIS CONTRADICTED BY THE WEIGHTIEST NAMES, ...	267
PROP. 3.—FUTURE PROBATION CONTRARY TO ANALOGY, ...	271

V. THE PHILOSOPHICAL HYPOTHESIS, CONTINUED, ... 277

PROP. 4.—THE LAW OF OB DURACY ADVERSE TO FUTURE SELF-RECOVERY, ...	277
PROP. 5.—THE LAW OF HABIT ADVERSE TO FUTURE SELF-RECOVERY, ...	279
PROP. 6.—THE NATURE OF SIN ADVERSE TO FUTURE SELF-RECOVERY, ...	284
PROP. 7.—THE HYPOTHESIS OF A RESTORATIVE INFLUENCE IN PENAL SUFFERINGS CONTRADICTED BY PLAIN FACTS, ...	289

VI. THE PHILOSOPHICAL HYPOTHESIS, CONTINUED, ... 295

PROP. 8.—THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE UNIVERSAL TRIUMPH OF ALMIGHTY LOVE AN UNWARRANTED FANCY, ...	295
PROP. 9.—THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE UNIVERSAL TRIUMPH OF ALMIGHTY POWER, IMPOSSIBLE, 300	

	PAGE
VII. THE PHILOSOPHICAL HYPOTHESIS, CON-	
CLUDED, ...	317
PROP. 10. — UNIVERSAL RESTORATION NEVER TO BECOME A FIXED DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH,	317
PROP. 11. — THE FAILURE OF THE HY- POTHESIS; THE REVOLTING ULTIMATE CON- DITION OF INCORRIGIBLE SOULS, . . .	319
PROP. 12. — THE FINAL CONCESSION: FEAR, NOT SPECULATION, THE GREATER WISDOM, .	327

<i>INFERENCES</i> , ...	335
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INTRODUCTION.



THE DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS.

THE TRUE CONSCIOUSNESS.



INTRODUCTION.

IN some of its variations, human nature seems to exhibit a twofold consciousness. Under strong diverse influences, men utter sentiments strikingly diverse, and even contradictory.

An eminent Unitarian writer characterized Theodore Parker as a man of "a double consciousness;" in his controversial moods saying bitter and almost profane things — that "Jesus was not without errors," "nor without the stain of his times," nor "without sins," and that he "had seen the love of God more clearly exhibited in a cold snake than in Jesus of Nazareth;" while, in his better frames, he gave utterance to sweet and most excellent things, and covered the name of Christ with the highest eulogium, as in the following lines:

"Jesus, there is no dearer name than thine,
Which Time has blazoned on his mighty scroll;

His wreaths and garlands ever did entwine
So fair ■ temple of so vast ■ soul.
There every virtue set his triumph seal;
Wisdom conjoined with strength and radiant grace,
In ■ sweet copy heaven to reveal,
And stamp perfection on ■ mortal face."

Becoming antipodes, even sincere inquirers kick against the skies. In their progressive development, the most symmetrical and exact truths have passed through irregular, fitful, and varying phases. In concepts, half-truths, and formulas; through evolutions, involutions, and revolutions; by accessions, concessions, and recessions; by drifts, currents, and counter-currents, the world of thought has had its genesis and its growth. Fierce onsets against the truth, and for the truth, have drawn out long battalions. New points of attack and defence have often transferred the conflict to new centres, and changed the position of the contesting forces. Her champions have seldom slept on old battlefields; but the goddess herself, in her empyrean heights, has remained unchanging and unchangeable.

The contests between "Liberalists" and "Evangelicals" in theology, have had their varying and sometimes contradictory phases. Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D. D., has said : * "Neither the Unitarians nor the Trinitarians have gained a complete victory : each has taken some important position and yielded some other. We have a book called 'Concessions of Trinitarians;' another might be written containing the 'Concessions of Unitarians.' Neither side has conceded, or ought to concede, any real truth of experience or of statement; but it is honorable to each to concede its own partial and inadequate statements."

For ourselves, this question has a profounder significance. Three elements — strong individuality, entire personal freedom, and ardent spiritual longings — possessed by the same person, will produce, at times, strikingly different opinions and sentiments. But, add another element of character — a radical spirit of doubt — and we have manifestations so widely and fundamentally diverse, as to seem like the products of two natures. The evil genius of doubt leads

* "Orthodoxy: its Truths and its Errors," pp. 17, 18.

into the wildest speculations, and inspires the most desperate and revolting utterances.

But when the reaction from this abnormal condition comes, the better sentiments gain ascendancy, the soul becomes more lucid, candid, and deeply reflective, and gives utterance to those profounder convictions of the inner heart, far exceeding in value all that had been said when puzzled by speculation, or intoxicated by applause, or maddened by controversy. It is worthy of notice, that admissions made by the baldest unbelievers, in their better moods, often go very far to corroborate the essential truth of Christianity, conferring the highest encomiums upon that system of faith, which, when under other influences, they had freely ridiculed and denounced.

“Evangelical Theology” has been an object of particular assault from various forms of speculation and unbelief, under the self-assumed, though often misleading, designation of “Liberalism.” Its characteristic tenets have been ridiculed and denounced as irrational, absurd, and unworthy of respect. Hard and abusive things have been said by some who have styled

themselves "Liberalists;" but the better class of liberalists, and some of all classes, in their better moods, have made remarkable concessions in favor of the great doctrines, which, in the heat of controversy, or when puzzled by doubt, they had vehemently opposed.

Some of these concessions will engage our attention in this volume. But let me not be misunderstood. The concessions which will be cited are either full and direct, or implied, and chiefly of an individual character, revealing the workings of individual minds. In a considerable number of cases, however, they are the utterances of editors of denominational periodicals, or of persons assuming to speak for their denominations; and, in all cases, the parties quoted stand before the public as the representatives, ecclesiastically, of non-evangelical views.

When the volume of "Concessions of Trinitarians" was published by the American Unitarian Association, in 1855, an eminent Unitarian editor, in a book notice,* said of it:

"There is but one plausible objection which those whom the volume offends may raise against

* *Christian Examiner*, January, 1856, p. 155.

it. They may say, — some of them have said, — that it is unfair to quote what some writers have uttered in favor of views associated with heresy, when what they have uttered directly against the heresy is kept back.”

This glaring defect, in the book referred to, will be avoided in these pages, so far as will be consistent with manifest propriety and necessity, and brief statements of the opposite views of the writers quoted will be given.

But the editor immediately proceeds to answer this objection; and, in so doing, makes a substantial concession, of considerable significance. He says:

“The answer which meets the objection is ■ simple one. These views associated with heresy are a main element of the heresy, and do even neutralize its heretical character. So that, if the book succeeds in exposing the inconsistency of those who commend certain principles, and yet condemn the legitimate consequences and concomitants of them, it accomplishes very effectively its leading design.”

Slightly paraphrasing these last sentences, we answer in advance, with the assistance of this

eminent representative of "liberalism," probable objections that may be brought against this volume.

These concessions associated with liberalism are the better elements of liberalism, and, legitimately construed, would neutralize its heretical character. So that, if this volume succeeds in exposing the inconsistencies of those liberalists who commend the fundamental principles of evangelical theology, the legitimate consequences and concomitants of which they have been accustomed to condemn, it accomplishes very effectively one of its designs.

But such an end is not enough to justify such a task. May we not hope, by kindliness of spirit and a careful avoidance of offensive allusions, by impartiality and conscientious accuracy, by thorough analysis and zealous devotion to essential truth, to promote a higher good — to establish vacillating minds, and secure greater unity of faith and fellowship among all Christian believers?

A BROAD
FUNDAMENTAL CONCESSION.



A TEST PRINCIPLE OF GREAT TRUTHS.

A BROAD FUNDAMENTAL CONCESSION,

of great value, from ■ “liberal” source,* becomes available at the outset, and will serve a useful purpose, as a test principle, through the successive stages of this investigation.

■ *It has come to be a recognized principle among the most advanced students of theology, that every great and wide-spread belief, every doctrine that has been clung to and lived in through a long series of years, no matter how false its form may be, must have its core in some precious and substantial elements of truth. The human mind was never made, even in its lowest and grossest state, to be satisfied with error alone. A lie — which is a lie and nothing more, the same as a body which is all disease, or a soul which has sinned till it is*

■ The Christian Examiner, January, 1867, pp. 36, 37.

utterly without goodness—must die inevitably of its own nature. It is the truth inside of falsehood which gives it life and beauty, which makes it loved and clung to, which enables it, like a fortress full of men, as compared with one which is only dead matter, to resist attacks and repair the ravages which from time to time are made in its walls.

.

And when we find a doctrinal statement, which we feel sure is wrong, resisting all our attacks, and held not only in the minds of scholars but by the great common heart, it is absolute proof that the world needs it, is better off with it, errors and all, than with our pure half-truth, and that it is something we need to conquer to possess, not to destroy.”

Keeping this broad thesis before us, let us proceed to notice some specific concessions, in regard to three great doctrines of Evangelical Theology.

BOOK FIRST.
THE DEITY OF CHRIST.



I.
The Downward Slide.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST.



I.

The Downward Slide.

BY the Deity of Christ we understand, not that, in some low sense, Christ was Divine; but that Supreme Deity was comprised in the extraordinary personage Christ Jesus. With some conspicuous exceptions, this view has been held by Christian believers, ever and everywhere. Although the verdict of majorities does not determine truth, yet it is hardly supposable that the Great Head of the Church, who has promised to be with it always, should suffer it to embrace a delusion so radical, so wide-spread, and so enduring. This doctrine is essential to make Christianity practically an efficient and vital power, in the world, and in the human soul. Without it, piety wanes, the Church declines, enthusiasm is chilled, prayer

loses its efficacy, and the world reaps an easy harvest. It gives unity to the Bible, and makes all its utterances fall into one majestic, consistent scheme.

Numerous departures from this great doctrine — from very slight modifications to radical and total denials — have gained currency, blighting the faith, and impairing the efficiency of the church. Within the various modern "Liberal" bodies, all shades of opinion respecting Jesus Christ exist, — from the modal or Sabellian Semi-Trinitarianism, down through High and Low Arianism, Socinianism, Priestleyism, and Humanitarianism, to Naturalism, and Pantheism.

Two marked tendencies are clearly discernible among "Liberalists" — an upward and a downward slide, — and Arianism is the pivotal or dividing point. Arianism, taking its position in an indefinable and baseless realm, and presenting Christ as a figment of ingenious conjecture, can afford no secure resting-place for earnest souls. It lacks coherence and vital power. Hence, by logical necessity, there must be an inevitable drift from it, either upward to Sabellianism, to "the Logos doctrine," and the abso-

lute Deity of Christ; or downward, to Humanitarianism and Pantheism: for Humanitarianism cannot rest, until it swamps in a deadening Pantheism — the apotheosis of human nature.

The downward slide has been strikingly and abundantly illustrated within the ranks of the Unitarian denomination, a very perceptible rationalistic drift having characterized it from its inceptive stages. Springing up in England simultaneously with English Deism, out of the rising spirit of free thought, it has been peculiarly subject to the spirit of doubt. This was evinced in the writings of Clarke, Whitby, Whiston, Priestley, and others, in England; by Mayhew and his associates, in New England, in the middle of the last century; and later, by Freeman, Kirkland, Hollis, Sewall, Norton, the Club of Boston Transcendentalists, the Brook Farm Community, Parker, Emerson, Frothingham, Abbott, and their fellows, who have floated swiftly down on the rapidly accelerating current.

In the days of Buckminster and Channing, this tendency was not so perceptible. But the period was a peculiar one. Neither Buckminster nor Channing had any sympathy with the

radicalism of the eighteenth century, but were decidedly opposed to the French revolutionary school—to the materialism and infidelity of French and English radicals. But Channing was a bold champion of reform and progress, a man of ideas, and an innovator. A writer in the *Christian Examiner** said of him: "Within his Arian theology and conservative affinities, he bore the seeds of all the new ideas that have given such life, and at times threatened such mischief to the Unitarian body." He was "the father of Unitarian Rationalism in America," and the virtual founder also of the ideal school that passed over into Transcendentalism.

A few facts will show the present downward slide. An eminent Unitarian writer,† in 1870, said: "The National Conference has received into its fellowship many who hold with Theodore Parker and the Tübingen critics, that the New Testament is not an infallible rule of faith and practice, that the fourth Gospel is a forgery of the Second Century, that the whole framework of narrative, in the New Testament, called

* July, 1865, pp. 34, 36.

† Rev. E. H. Sears, in *Monthly Religious Magazine*, May, 1870, Vol. I. p. 318.

miracle, is false and mythical, and that such a being as Jesus Christ, as he is presented in the New Testament, never existed on this earth," and that there are "Unitarian pulpits which teach that God is not a conscious personality, that he has never revealed himself, and that the belief in a Divine revelation has been more harmful than beneficial to humanity."

Rev. James W. Thompson, D. D., wrote * of a Divinity graduate at Harvard, who "did not believe in much of anything, in Christianity, in personal immortality, or a personal God." Rev. O. B. Frothingham has proclaimed that "God is only an abstract force or goodness, and has never revealed himself." Rev. Samuel Longfellow said, "What Jesus was, and what he did, we never can know," — "he was only a mythologic demi-god," "a hideous idol." Rev. J. L. Hatch said, "Jesus of Nazareth, as given in the New Testament, is offensive to me in the extreme." These are only a few specimens of many utterances of these men, while their names were yet in the annual list of "the Unitarian Ministers in America;" and similar declarations might be produced of many whose names are

* Monthly Religious Magazine, February, 1870.

still in that list. The list embraces about four hundred names, of whom an eminent Unitarian editor said,* "From one fourth to one third are supposed to accept the results of the Tübingen criticism, and are in sympathy with Messrs. Frothingham and Abbott." A writer in the *Christian Examiner*, in 1866, thought the Unitarian body divided nearly evenly between persons in sympathy with Theodore Parker and conservatives. Dr. J. W. Thompson,† in 1870, said of two hundred and forty-three Unitarian pastors, "forty were Free Religionists, and fifty more give to the Free Religion movement the benefit of their sympathy and good will."

A brief extract from an article by the editor of the *Liberal Christian* ‡ will show more clearly the peculiar varieties of belief and unbelief in this denomination:

"Here is Dr. A., for one, representing the strictly conservative and historical school, who cannot see how anybody denying the supernatural element can have the face to claim the Christian name. Here, for another, is Dr. B.,

* *Monthly Religious Magazine*, April, 1870.

† *Monthly Religious Magazine*, February, 1870, p. 118.

‡ July 23, 1870.

who thinks Orthodox faith and piety, with any amount of incredible dogma, better than Unitarian coldness and negation, however enlightened, and regrets, perhaps, he was ever born into a Church he cannot conscientiously desert, and wishes to improve in faith and practice. Here is Dr. C., who is as much a transcendentalist as an historic believer, and who can be the most conservative and the most radical man, by turns or at the same moment, so that you know not where to count him, more than the farmer did the speckled pig. Here, again, is Brother E., who is very wholly and heartily devoted to Christian institutions and to the spirit and example of Christ, but who thinks Christ had no supernatural authority, and his church no foundation but its self-recommending virtue. Here is Brother F., who is as much a minister of the Unitarian Church (being settled over a Unitarian society) as any one, who agrees with Christ when he agrees with him, convicts him of error, treats him as an equal, thinks him over-preached, and over-praised, and over-trusted, and does not celebrate the chief ordinance by which he is remembered."

Subsequently the same editor said : *

"This is what the Christian world is saying of us : 'The Unitarians haven't faith enough in the Gospel of Christ to make a positive and historical profession of faith in it a condition of fellowship. They allow anybody that calls himself a Christian to use their name and enjoy their prestige, no matter whether he be a disbeliever in the Christian miracles and records, or even in the historical existence of such a person as Jesus Christ. Nay, he may be a Pantheist or an Atheist, and, if he calls himself a Christian, and is not immoral in life, he may join the Unitarian Conference, and claim as good an ecclesiastical standing as the most conservative believer.' This is all true, and the orthodox world does not see it any more clearly than we do."

These exceedingly frank acknowledgments show the terrible downward slide from Arianism.

Let us now accept a more grateful task, and trace the upward tendency among Liberalists. We shall see how each higher party discards the lower, in its attempts to mount upward to something more satisfying and enduring.

* July 21, 1871.

II.

The Humanitarian Concession.

II.

The Humanitarian Concession.

HUMANITARIANISM presents Jesus as a pure man, having a divine mission like the old prophets, and distinguished from other men, not by his nature, but only by the special work he was set apart to perform.

We cordially unite with all who exalt the human nature of Jesus, as an important recognition of the earthward side of this wonderful and now glorified being. The doctrine of Christ's essential humanity, no less than his essential divinity, has ever been a fundamental truth of Orthodoxy, of great value and unspeakable preciousness. We need for our Saviour one to whom no human experience is strange, as an encouragement to frailty, and an incentive to holy endeavor. As a sharer of our nature, Jesus comes very near to us, enters into our human

woes and sufferings, and awakens our tenderest sympathies and love. "He took upon him the seed of Abraham," to be, and to be reckoned, as a man. Possessed of a human soul and will, with finite susceptibilities and limitations, he was "the consummate flower of our humanity, exhausting the possibilities of our nature."

As a further agreement, we add, that, while metaphysically and ontologically, like the rest of the human race, Jesus was discriminated from them in that he felt himself to be in a peculiar and exceptional sense the "*sent*" of God, ordained to a divine mission — to establish the kingdom of God on the earth,—he appropriated to himself the Messianic prophecies of his countrymen, and meekly assumed to be "the Christ." And, even more than this, with the better Socinians, we accept the declaration of Renan, that "the consciousness of God in Jesus exceeded that of all other men."

But we cannot agree with the more Rationalistic humanitarian, who contends that, with all his intellectual and moral superiority over other human beings, Jesus was nevertheless subject to the prejudices and errors of his times; nor

even with the moderate humanitarian, who denies the pre-existence and the superhuman character of Christ, and claims that he was *merely* a man, begotten by Joseph.

The latter view, which has gained considerable currency, originated from a Jewish standpoint, and was first held by an early but obscure Jewish sect. It inspired no living, or working energy, made no progress, dwindled, and died. About three hundred years ago, revived by Socinus, and from him receiving the modern designation, Socinianism, it has run a new career. The celebrated Dr. Priestley, after his removal to Philadelphia, near the close of the last century, and his contemporary, Dr. Bentley, in Salem, Mass., were its earliest advocates in America. Fifty years ago it constituted a very small element in the Unitarian denomination, but to-day it has a more extensive currency, and is held, by many, even in its more radical and rationalistic form, as advocated by Theodore Parker. The more influential and representative men of the Unitarian clergy protest against both the lower and the higher humanitarian conceptions of Jesus as unsatisfactory, and contend for something better.

The Radical Humanitarian View rejected.

One of the most revolting acts of modern Liberalism has been its bringing Jesus into unfavorable comparison with Socrates, as in ■ lecture, in Horticultural Hall, Boston, in 1873, by Mr. F. E. Abbott, in which he contended for the great superiority of the latter. The following winter, in ■ discourse in King's Chapel, on Socrates and Christ, Professor William Everett* ably and eloquently answered Mr. Abbott. We cite a few passages.

"I see Socrates coming into the world more than four centuries before our era, in a country and ■ city already approaching the summit of ■ renown utterly out of proportion to their size and force. I see him reared and educated among institutions the most energetic, in an intellectual atmosphere the most intensely vital that the world has ever known. I see his city gaining and keeping a sovereignty over millions of subjects which was a never-ceasing wonder to her sons, and envy to her enemies.

.

"I see Socrates brought up under the influ-

■ See the Unitarian Review, September, 1874, pp. 108-125

ence of such a house. I see him mixing freely with his fellow-citizens, and filling with entire honor the offices and trusts as from time to time they lay upon him. I see him winning a character for virtue according to the highest standard of the times; proving his justice, his moderation, his courage, in many a situation of doubt and dread; keeping his body in soberness, temperance, and chastity, against temptations that it is mild language to call infernal.

.

“He forsakes his business, one of honor and profit in his time, and even his family, that he may kindle a pure flame in the minds of the Athenians. His means to this end is conversation; he is no orator, no poet, no lecturer, but he talks. He seizes on every one he meets, and forces him, by a series of searching questions, to confess what are the true principles of action, according to virtue and the laws; and in most cases, also, forces him to confess how serious have been the shortcomings, how deep the blindness, of him whom Socrates thus subjects to his merciless cross-questionings, his ironical disclaimers, his provoking calmness in debate.

"Thus fastening on his city, like a gad-fly on a high-mettled but over-fed horse, — it is his own phrase, — for thirty years, he pricks her children on to an examination of themselves by the most tremendous intellectual stimulus ever tried by a teacher.

.
 "At length thirty years of dislike culminate in hatred; an indictment is trumped up of corrupting the youth, and bringing in new gods.

.
 A small majority vote him to death. To this he bows as the act of law; rejects ■ plan for his escape; discourses with his friends in his cell on the highest problems of the soul, and passes away with entire calmness among his weeping votaries, in the full conviction that they shall meet again.

.
 "It was, indeed, ■ noble, a glorious life, — a life, ay, and death, to make men better, and to bring them nearer to God, — a life of which our Lord shall take deep account in the day that he makes up his jewels. And yet, when Socrates is given me as a proof that other coun-

tries and other faiths may produce the equal of Jesus of Nazareth, I think men must read history backwards, to prefer the master of Xenophon and Plato to the master of Peter and John.

“No one can fail to be struck by the interesting resemblances in the story of these two souls.

.

“Nor can any one fail to notice, too, the remarkable contrasts,—the birth of Christ in a nation much like Athens in its insignificant extent, but in all else its very opposite,—proud, isolated, feigning to disown the dominion under which it crouched, cherishing a deep, lofty, pure faith, all but buried under a mass of punctilious superstition, diffused among every people, mingling with none; his necessary exclusion from anything like real political life, his companions chosen from the comparatively humble and uneducated, his working time of barely three years instead of forty, and his taking-off at the beginning of triumph,—all these points might be studied with profit again and again, by one who would estimate the character and influence of the two. But I believe that such resemblances

and contrasts are of little importance in comparison with the fundamental issue between the ways in which these two great souls imparted of themselves to man."

After very ably unfolding the radical differences in the manner and the matter of the discourses of the two, he says:

"Truly pious was Socrates ■ his time understood piety; duly he performed all stated services of the gods. . . . But to advance a step in real knowledge of God was as much beyond him as to calculate ■ planet's orbit.

.

"How totally different was the ground taken by Christ. How he directly answered questions, solved difficulties, and promised strength to the weakest; how he brought down God to men, and engaged on his word, which never deceived, that the Holy Spirit should be given to them that asked it, — setting man once and forever on the rock, — God as revealed in him. He authoritatively declared himself as gifted with a personal intercourse with God, which made him the bread from heaven, the water of life, and

the wine from whose heavenly juices the blood of the new covenant went coursing through the veins of his disciples. In short, Socrates did the best with earth; Jesus opened heaven.

.

“And now, for one last ground of comparison, what has been the result? When Socrates was accused of corrupting the youth, his enemies pointed with triumph to some of his dearest friends and special followers, who had proved a curse to the city, alike in public and in private. This charge is indignantly and justly repelled, on the ground that he had again and again warned them against such evil courses, and that the only good part of their lives was passed in his company. I do not blame him for not having power to change the hearts of men. It is no fault of his that less than four hundred years after his death, Cicero, the last and best of all who made him their model, meeting as foul a murder with ~~as~~ calm a courage, left in an utterly corrupted world none to uphold pure virtue, and see into God’s ways, save where some echoes of the lyre of Judah yet sang in the songs of Virgil. It ~~was~~

not the fault of Socrates if those whom his doctrine threw back on themselves proved unequal to the load. But when I am calmly asked to value him as a hero and a saint, by the side of Him whose life and death first made the apostles what they were, then successively converted the Jew, the Greek, the Roman, the barbarian, — who has remodelled virtue, and founded the new age on the wreck of the old, — I feel it is an insult to my common sense to be requested to rank the master of Alcibiades with the master of St. Paul.

“Among the loftiest and most refined doctrines which Plato ascribes to Socrates is that of an unseen world, to which the philosopher alone has access, — where live the real, true, archetypal forms of things, of which all we see on the earth are rude copies and imperfect reflections. It is the object of the perfect life to emancipate itself from the world of sense, and gain entrance into the world of ideas. Central among them he places the ideal man, the archetype of humanity, the real, true man himself, whom all earthly men are poor attempts to imitate. This, you see, which is all in black and

white in Plato's 'Republic,' written two thousand two hundred years ago, is the last brand-new theory to which I alluded, as offering a nobler model for our research than any saint that ever lived, — Socrates, Jesus, and all of them.

"I accept the doctrine. Not that it can be proved; not that, when lighted up by all Plato's gorgeous imagery, and worked out with all Socratic subtilty, it was anything more than an abstraction; not that modern philosophers have dressed it up with any better garments; but because, by God's grace, it is now real, living, life-giving; because the ideal man has existed for all men to see on earth; because as he lived here then, so now he lives in the unseen world; and because, beyond Washington, beyond John Eliot, beyond Milton, beyond St. Louis, beyond St. Bernard, beyond Aurelius, beyond Socrates, beyond Moses, beyond Buddha, there lives forever, in the glory of the Father, the ideal of humanity, the Son of Man, the man Christ Jesus."

Rousseau's attitude towards Christianity is well known as that of a moderate Deist verging towards the rationalistic school of later times.

His admiration for Christ and his deep conviction of his superhuman character were eloquently set forth in the following familiar comparison of Jesus with Socrates:*

"I will confess to you that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration as the purity of the Gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers: with all their pomp of diction, how mean, how contemptible are they compared with the Scripture. Is it possible that ■ book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred Personage whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner; what an affecting gracefulness in his delivery; what sublimity in his maxims; what profound wisdom in his discourses; what presence of mind, what subtilty, what truth in his replies; how great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who

■ "Treatise on Education, or Emile," b. iv. Works, vol. ix. pp. 147-151. Geneva, 1782.

could so live, and so die, without weakness and without ostentation ?

“ When Plato described his imaginary good man, loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ: the resemblance was so striking that all the fathers perceived it.

“ What prepossession, what blindness must it be to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the Son of Mary ; what an infinite disproportion there is between them. Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last : if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was anything more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice. He had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just, before Socrates defined justice ; Leonidas had given up his life for his country before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty ; the Spartans were a sober

people before Socrates recommended sobriety; before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men.

"But where could Jesus learn, among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality of which he only hath given us both precept and example? The greatest wisdom was made known among the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honor to the vilest people upon earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for: that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates in receiving the poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates,

which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition in fact only shifts the difficulty without obviating it. It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that only one should furnish the history of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the *inventor* would be a more astonishing character than the *hero*."

On account of this reverence for Christ by Rousseau, Voltaire was highly enraged, and when he read the eloquent passage, cited above, he frantically cried out, "The Judas! the Judas! He deserts us when we are about to triumph."

The Common Humanitarian View rejected.

Two classes of Liberalists meet us directly at this point, discarding the humanitarian view of Christ as totally unsatisfactory. We have a protest, first, in the interest of pure Theism.

A writer in the Review Department of the Christian Examiner,* in a *critique* on Rev. James Freeman Clarke's "Orthodoxy: its Truths and its Errors," says (whether justly or unjustly we will not attempt to decide), that Mr. Clarke is faulty in his statement of the great truths underlying Orthodoxy. Quoting a passage in which Mr. Clarke claims to present "the underlying and informing 'truth'" of Orthodoxy, the reviewer proceeds: "And behold he does not allude to God! Its Saviour is the man Jesus. Its Holy Spirit is the feeling with which man looks upon Jesus. Hence we reject wholly Dr. Clarke's 'truth' in Orthodoxy. We go to a deeper thought; we demand a deeper faith. God is with us. . . . A theology with only a man to fill the offices of God! Much as we admire the kindness of Dr. Clarke's heart towards Orthodoxy, we cannot but be shocked by the position in which he places himself. Orthodoxy has in Christ a 'God and Saviour.' In Dr. Clarke's 'truth,' in which Orthodoxy and Unitarianism are to meet and unite, there is no 'God and Saviour.' We can assure Dr. Clarke

* November, 1866, p. 414, &c., over the signature E. C. T.

that Orthodox faith in God will never accept this 'truth.' Loyal to God always, it will cease to regard Jesus as Saviour when it ceases to regard him as God. And Unitarianism, if it will not cease to have a theology, and become the merest humanitarianism, must advance to pure Theism."

Again (p. 422) he says: "We must reiterate our conviction that Christian theology cannot accept any less than God, in the great offices of the divine administration. A Christ who is not God, who does not veritably sit on the throne of heaven, doing and sustaining by virtue of absolute Godhead, can only fill the merest human offices."

And again he says: "To speak of a fellow-man, or of an almost God, as the one who is coming, whose kingdom is the hope of our souls, who will deliver, will redeem, will bring home to heaven, is all error of the first magnitude — not of the heart and life, indeed, but of thought — against him who is Saviour and Spirit to all our race, the God and Father of all souls. The effort to perpetuate this error can only delay with a very few the unfolding of

Christian faith in God. Within the ranks of earnest Orthodoxy there will be no acceptance of our brother's position. There, Christ will cease to be the central figure of theology when he ceases to be God."

But this writer contends that Theism is yet to be "the great Christian faith." The difficulties in this theological scheme of pure Theism we will not attempt to settle, nor will we undertake the difficult task of showing how mere Theism can be a "*Christian faith*."

Another protest against the mere humanity of Jesus is made, in the interest of Sabellianism, by Rev. Dr. F. H. Hedge : *

"We want the divine; we want to see in Christianity the power of God and the wisdom of God made manifest for the moral welfare of man; we want to see the Spirit of God entering into human nature to revive and redeem it. We want a teacher conscious of God's in-presence, claiming attention as a voice out of the heavens. We want a doctrine which shall announce itself with divine authority; not a system of moral philosophy, but the word and kingdom of God.

■ Reason in Religion, (Roberts Bros.) 1875, p. 242.

Without this stamp of divine legitimacy, without the witness and signature of the Eternal, Christianity would want that which alone gives it weight with the mass of mankind, and the place it now holds in human things. This it is which constitutes the specific difference between philosophy and religion; between the abstractions of the intellect addressed to the intellect, and truth incarnate, addressing heart and will."

It will not be amiss to add here a few remarkable passages from Renan, which show his deep sense of the divine elements in the character of Christ. He says : *

"Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; and all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

Again, Renan, speaking of Christ, says :

"A matchless man, so grand that, although here all must be judged from a purely scientific

point of view, I would not gainsay those who, struck with the exceptional character of his work, call him God." *

Again: "Even to-day, rationalism does not look at him closely, except on its knees." †

Again: "He is more than a reformer of an obsolete religion; *he is the centre of the eternal religion of humanity.*"

* Religious History and Criticism, p. 161.

† *Ibid.*, p. 213.

III.

The Arian Concession.

57

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A RIANISM lifts Christ above mere humanity, teaching his pre-existence; that he is the Son of God, of like nature with God, and therefore divine; that he created the worlds, and is a proper object of adoration. We recognize here substantial elements of truth, or rather valuable half-truths, though, in this imperfect form, faulty and misleading.

But the more distinctive phases of Arianism present Christ as a created being, "created out of nothing;" "the Son of God," not "eternally begotten," but "begotten before the ages;" not consubstantial with the Father, but only similar in nature; not of essential, but of derived divinity; entitled not to supreme, but to subordinate adoration; and creating the worlds by delegated power.

Fifty years ago, the Arian conception of Christ

prevailed among the more evangelical liberalists, especially in the Unitarian body. Channing was an eminent representative of this class, so highly exalting Christ as an object of trust, of honor, and of adoration, and speaking so emphatically of his Divinity as to confuse and mislead many minds in the evangelical sects, as some do in our day. So deep and earnest is the protest of Arianism against mere humanitarianism, as unworthy and unsatisfying, and so important has the task of exalting Christ been felt to be, that human speculation and ingenuity have been taxed to the utmost to find a place for him almost up to Supreme Deity, but yet inferior and subordinate to the Eternal Father. We rejoice in all tendencies to rise from the lowest plane of a merely human Christ, as worthy aspirations, whose indulgence will not fail to lead many of the best and truest seekers even to the Supreme and Ever-living God; while many will doubtless still content themselves with robing a finite, mutable creature with glories they vainly call Divine.

Rev. Dr. George E. Ellis furnishes an interesting and eloquent example. He says: *

* Christian Examiner, May, 1856, p. 364.

“Trinitarians sometimes speak of us as if, in denying an underived Divinity to Christ, we totally deprived ourselves of a God whom we might trust, and left the central throne of heaven empty, because we do not seat upon it the vicegerent of the Most High. We can tell them that our doctrine gives us the same God whom they worship, and another being, — yes, a Divine Being besides. We know of nothing that hinders, but that God may impart, may delegate, any measure of his own properties, save simply that of self-existence.”

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“The universe of being is to us enriched by an additional being, through the view which we entertain of Christ. The awful vacuum between the loftiest partakers of angelic natures and the Supreme has now a radiant occupant, who fills the whole of it.”

What an attempt to exalt Jesus! What an acknowledgment of the unsatisfactoriness of the humanitarian view of Christ! With only a “derived existence,” “delegated powers,” and “subordinate to God,” he is nevertheless declared to be “infinitely above humanity,” a “Divine Being,”

"a radiant occupant" of "the awful vacuum between the loftiest partakers of angelic natures and the Supreme." A beautiful figment of human speculation! A significant confession of the conscious need of a Redeemer infinitely exalted above the range of mere humanity — one of the deepest soul-wants among many Liberalists, and in the world at large.

But even the most lofty and ingenious conceptions of Jesus, wrought out by the highly cultivated thinkers and writers consecrated to the advocacy of Arianism, have failed to afford a sure resting-place to deeply spiritual minds, who have ever "cried out for the living God." Turning to Him, the yearning soul exclaims, "All my springs are in Thee."

Following the traces of this upward tendency, we see the path dividing, but mounting more and more toward higher and fuller realizations of the Divine in Christ.

In the Unitarian denomination, Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D. D., has become an eminent representative of the Sabellian theory,* although, in some of his utterances, he seems

* See "Orthodoxy, its Truths and its Errors," p. 432, &c.

inconsistent with that view, as in the section already criticised, and also in some more recent statements. But he has made a very decided protest against the Arian doctrine of Christ. He said : *

“ That view which supposed that Christ was neither truly man nor truly God, but some high, pre-existing being between the two, appears to us to be the falsest and most unsatisfactory of all the doctrines concerning Christ’s person. It separates him more entirely from our sympathies than either of the others. It destroys both his divinity and his humanity, and by giving us something intermediate, gives us really nothing. It makes his apparent human life a delusion, his temptation unreal, his human sympathies and sorrows deceptive. We think, therefore, that the Church was right in rejecting the Arian doctrine.”

A very decided Unitarian protest against the prevailing theory of early American Unitarianism.

Dr. F. H. Hedge also enters his protest against Arianism, in favor of Sabellianism. He says : †

* See “ Orthodoxy, its Truths and its Errors,” p. 208.

† Reason in Religion, (Roberts Bros.) 1875, p. 234.

"Arianism leaves the chasm unatoned. If the Son is a creature, then there is still the infinite distance between God and man. But, in order that man may be redeemed, Divinity must be in immediate contact with humanity. God and man must unite in one person."

Again : * " If we say, in accordance with the Arian view, that the Christ is neither God nor man, but a being distinct from both, we remove him so far from our sympathies, and all our associations and habits of thought; we make him so unreal, so chimerical, so abnormal a being, that we know not how to adjust ourselves with one whom we can neither adore as God nor sympathize with as man, and so must needs lose the best effect of his idea."

Rev. Dr. Sears says : †

"Arius calls him (Jesus) God in a subordinate sense, and worthy of Divine honors, though not the honors accorded supremely to the Deity. This was the very doctrine of Paganism, and was vehemently opposed, as an attempt to import idolatry into Christian worship. To wor-

* Reason in Religion, p. 256.

† Monthly Religious Magazine, July, 1860, p. 36.

ship a creature, though in a subordinate sense, was precisely what the heathen did, for they acknowledged One Supreme above their local and created deities. 'The Catholic Church,' says Athanasius, 'does not believe more than the Homooousian Trinity, lest it tumble down into Arianism, which is the same with pagan polytheism and idolatry, since it introduced in like manner the worshipping of creatures together with the Creator.'

Again : * "Arianism lacks coherence and vital force, is essentially ditheistic and idolatrous, elevating a creature to a place of power and honor due to no finite being, making a finite being the creator of the universe, just as the Gnostics did, thus robbing the Creator of his glory, and dividing it with another. It is unphilosophical, destroys the simplicity, beauty, and power of Christian worship, removes God out of sight, and, though it pays to his Son — 'created out of nothing' — honors which it calls 'subordinate,' they are honors which are due to the one God alone. He only is Creator, Saviour, Sanctifier, and Judge, and he cannot discharge himself of his own Al-

* Page 39.

mightiness; there can be no sub-deities in his dominions, and around him must gather all the splendors of the Godhead, to make Christian worship renewing, and give the soul a centre to all its aspirings and loves."

Rev. Rufus Ellis, D. D.,* said: "Arianism has died out, except perhaps amongst a very few of the elders. The ministers, we think, have gone further than the laymen in the direction of Humanitarianism. . . . But there are those — a few, at least — who, appealing partly to the other Gospels, but chiefly to St. John, are ready to affirm the essentially Divine in Christ, as the objective Source of the new life of love."

Again, in an address before the Ministerial Conference,† May 27, 1874, Dr. Ellis speaks of the drift of the Unitarian denomination from the Arian and Socinian views of Christ.

"The more thoughtful Unitarians have been steadily leaving behind a Unitarianism which set forth as the Saviour of the world a superhuman man. We are coming together from all sides in a Christianity which sees God in the man Jesus,

* Monthly Religious Magazine, November, 1866, p. 309.

† Unitarian Review, July, 1874, pp. 405-407.

and so has faith and hope in God. It has been a surprise and an offence, sometimes, when it ought to have been a relief to us, to find that the humanity of Jesus was intensely real; that God took our nature upon him, and not some angelic or preter-nature. We have been compelled by pitiless realists to see him in his human limitations, and to restore to him his proper human personality. We have admitted, somewhat reluctantly, that it is even more reverent to take his own word for what he was, than to substitute our own fond imaginations. We see that, however strange it may be, he did love and fear and hope and believe and rejoice and mourn as a man. But what may well have seemed to some at first a loss, turns out to be a gain; for this man Jesus will not, though they call it blasphemy, and threaten his life, — yes, and take it, — withhold from us the mystery of God in him, or bate one iota of the marvellous self-assertion which assures us that, unless we stand in the presence of a madman, God has come at last fully into the light of a human consciousness.

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"Happily, five or six books in the New Testament — certain epistles of St. Paul — have escaped all questioning, and they point to this wondrous mystery of God in Christ with a clearness which cannot be obscured. They disclose a kind and amount of faith in Jesus, a measure of discipleship, which lifts the Master who has called it forth into heavenly places. He has indeed done as the Jews charged, though not in their sense of the words; being a man, he has made himself God; and the clearer and more real you present his humanity, the more resplendent is the essential brightness of the Divinity ■ it shines in his life."

IV.

The Sabellian Concession.

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WE have said that, fifty years ago, the Arian view of Christ almost wholly prevailed among the more evangelical "liberalists" of every name, and especially in the Unitarian denomination. We find only few and widely scattered traces of Sabellianism in the Unitarian literature of that period. Since that time, however, there has been a very considerable change, and nowhere more apparent than in the evangelical wing of this denomination, among whom but few Arians now remain. After having long and vainly endeavored to rest satisfied in the Arian conception of Jesus, they have abandoned it for something higher, seeking a fuller Divine investiture of the character and person of the Redeemer. The revolt from Arianism in the

direction of a higher faith, has been twofold — the Sabellian and the Logos theories.

Sabellianism affords much to approve, for it identifies the Divine in Christ as God. Recognizing one Divine essence, it nevertheless inculcates a threeness in the Godhead, — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, — and the full indwelling of God in Christ, making him the manifestation of God. Hence they call Christ the "God-man," and do not hesitate to proclaim him "The Emmanuel, God with us." So far, all would be well, if it were all.

The distinctive points of Sabellianism are, that the threeness in the Godhead is not three distinctions in the *nature* of Deity, but only a modal conception — three methods of Divine manifestation, by evolution, out of one essence. Trinitarianism holds to one Divine essence, with three distinct but not separate personalities, necessitating some modification of the full idea of the term person; but yet presenting something so much more distinct and individual than three mere appearances or manifestations, as to justify the application of personal pronouns and personal titles. Sabellianism eliminates all personality,

and then applies individual names to mere appearances and manifestations. Furthermore, it teaches that the three manifestations, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are not eternal distinctions in the Godhead, but transient earthly phenomena, an accommodated conception of God adapted to time and space, merely temporary modes of Divine manifestation, to cease when the purpose for which they were made shall have been accomplished.

Says Dr. F. H. Hedge:

“When, in such sayings as those reported in the Fourth Gospel, ‘I and the Father are one,’ ‘He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,’ he identifies himself with the one Supreme, he does so in the sense of personation or representation, not of co-entity.” *

Again: “The visible human individual may personate or represent the invisible God. But the appearance is but a transient, earthly phenomenon, though embodying an eternal idea; and if we are logically honest, and in the spirit of that honesty analyze this conception of the God-man, we shall see that the phrase denotes an

* Reason in Religion, p. 229.

idea and a personal appearance in the scenes of time embodying that idea; ■ divine demonstration, not the individual through whom and in whom that demonstration was made. The Christ of the Gospel is that demonstration, — God in man. The image which Jesus has stamped of himself on the Church and the world stands for that." ■ Again he says,† speaking still of Christ: "The function of the person is historical, and therefore transient. In the sphere of spiritual contemplation no personality abides but the ever-becoming personality of God, conceived by faith, and born of faith, in the individual soul. Infinite and underived being alone can satisfy the freely inquiring, freely aspiring. Only that which bounds the uttermost thought, and tops the boldest imagination, can fulfil to reason and faith the idea of God. Whatever derived and secondary power by divine permission may hold that place is a temporary vicegerent, occupying a borrowed throne, and exercising a delegated sway, which he must finally deliver up to God, 'even the Father.' 'For when,' says the brave Apostle, 'he saith, "all things are put under,"'

■ Reason in Religion, p. 256.

† *Ibid.*, p. 260.

it is manifest that he is excepted that did put all things under.' ”

Such is the Christ of Sabellianism — the full manifestation of God — yet not an eternally existing, individual being; but a temporary phenomenon — in the ages to come, to be known as a historic appearance, exhibited in time, but faded out in eternity.

How transient and evanescent the Christ of Sabellianism! How different from the Christ of St. John — “the Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and the ending;” “which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty;” to whom the heavenly hosts ascribe “glory and dominion forever and ever.” ■

This doctrine destroys the essential Sonship of Christ. In a mere manifestation of the Divine, we fail to apprehend a distinct being whom we may recognize as the Son of God. As the Son, he indeed reflects the Father’s image, but he possesses an individuality not merely phenomenal, nor confined to temporal limits.

As a Unitarian rebuttal against this theory, setting forth very high views of the Son of God,

we cite from their Monthly Magazine * the following strong statements :

"The meaning of the appellation Son of God, as applied to Jesus Christ, is to be learned from its use in the Holy Scriptures.

"1. Our first point is, It denotes some manner of derivation from God.

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"There are a few theologians who suppose the appellation Son of God to be given to Christ because his human nature was begotten of the Holy Ghost, and miraculously conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, according to the word of the angel: '*Therefore*, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' This, indeed, is a part of the truth, but not the whole truth. It is Scriptural so far as it goes, but does not take in the whole of Scripture teaching on the subject, does not exhaust the reason why this name is given to our Lord and Saviour. The Church generally have believed the name to refer to the Divine nature of Christ, have believed in the eternal generation of the Son, the eternal Sonship of

■ April, 1861, p. 250, &c.

Christ. Thus, in the Nicene Creed, Christ is declared to be God *of* God, light *of* light, very God *of* very God. The word *of* here denotes derivation from. This, too, accords with the testimony which Christ himself gives us respecting his relation to the Father.

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“It is this truth of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father that is able to save the Church from the sense of any conflict between the full and proper divinity of Christ and the strictest Monotheism, between the fullest and heartiest worship of Christ and the worship of the one only living and true God.

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“In calling the Sonship of Christ *eternal*, we simply mean that *it is a relation with which time, considered as limited duration, has nothing to do.* We may, perhaps, illustrate the timeless relation of the Son to the Father by the relation of moral law to the Author of law. God did not create moral law any more than he created his own being, yet moral law is derived from God, and resides in God. Moral law is eternal as God himself, yet it does not and cannot exist

separate from, or independent of God. It has its source and seat in the bosom of God forever, from eternity to eternity. So God did not create the Son, but the Son is derived from the Father and is in the bosom of the Father. The Son is eternal as the Father, but he can do nothing of himself: his whole being and working is in and of the Father, and whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

"2. Our second point is, The appellation *Son of God*, as applied to Jesus Christ, denotes equality with God. 'We must abstract,' says Neander, speaking for Athanasius, 'from the expression *Son of God* and *begotten of God*, whatever belongs to sensuous relations, and then there remains to us the idea of Unity of Essence, and derivation of Nature.'* There seems at first view an inconsistency between the derivation of the Son from God and his equality or consubstantiality with God; but the Nicene Council asserted both, and must therefore have understood one expression in a sense accordant with the other. And we would prove one as

■ Christian Dogmas, p. 296.

we do the other. As we have endeavored to show that the idea of derivation is found in the appellation itself, *Son of God*, and in the testimonies which Christ gave of himself, so in like manner do we find the idea of his equality with God.

“Our Saviour defended his miracle of healing on the Sabbath day, by saying, ‘My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.’ Then the Jews sought to kill him, because he said ‘that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.’ (John v. 17, 18.) Again and again did they so understand his words. Our Saviour knew that they so understood them. He in whose mouth was no guile let them so understand them. Instead of saying one word to refute or correct their interpretation, he went on to repeat and develop it. He declared such a union of the Father and the Son, such a dwelling of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Father, such a doing by the Son of the works of the Father, as implies not only a oneness of will, but a oneness of essence with God. (John x. 28–39.)

“The equality of the Son with the Father appears in the formula of baptism given by

Christ to his disciples. 'Go, teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' &c. . . . In these words Christ puts himself in a line with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and thus declares himself to be of one nature with them. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the one God to whose service his disciples are to be dedicated. His language implies a union with God such as can belong to no created being.

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"The text John xiv. 28, 'My Father is greater than I,' is often quoted to show the inferiority of the Son. Doubtless there is a sense in which the Father is greater than the Son, but not such as in the least to diminish aught of the reverence, honor, love, and trust which are due to the Son as to the Father. Besides, in the passage referred to, Jesus is not speaking of his intrinsic nature as compared with that of the Father, but of the humiliation in which he then was, and of the glory into which he was about to enter.

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"The doctrine, then, of Christ as the Son of God, teaches us to acknowledge him as Lord

of all, to bow the knee to him in devoted love, obedience, prayer, and praise. . . . He is upon the throne. Earthly empires pass away, but his throne remains forever and ever. ‘The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.’”*

It will be difficult to find in Unitarian literature stronger statements of the essential truth of Orthodoxy in regard to Christ than these.

The Sabellian theory of Christ as the manifestation of God, only an appearance or a personation of the Divine, limited in duration to the scenes of time, and the Arian conception of Jesus as a being created before the worlds, are both ably opposed by another eminent Unitarian writer.† He says :

“ We believe in the Father everlasting, and the Father Everlasting supposes, as a correlative, the *Son Everlasting*, the archetype of the universe, — not *nominally*, but *really*, — who is be-

* Monthly Religious Magazine, April, 1861, p. 250, &c.

† Rev. Rufus Ellis, D. D., one of the editors of the Monthly Religious Magazine. See vol. xxiv., 1860, pp. 151, 152.

fore all imperfect worlds, the Image of invisible Glories, Light of Light. Certainly we believe that God was perfectly imaged in his universe before the birth on this little planet of the Son of Mary. He is evermore perfectly imaged before Jesus, before Abraham, before Adam. Now when we find our ideal of the Son of the Highest fully realized under human conditions in the life of Jesus, when we can conceive of no more perfect and absolute Child of God than we find in the historic Christ, we must needs say of him, It is he who is from everlasting in whom we have believed, whom we have prophesied. He came out of the heavens, out from the bosom of God, out from the depths of Eternity. He has emptied himself of his glory, he counts not his likeness to God a thing to be eagerly insisted upon, he becomes obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, not of necessity, but of his own free will; therefore by the grace of the Father he has ascended up where he was before, and the Humanity that was willing even through tears and agony of blood to be redeemed, has been exalted with him to dwell forever at the right hand of God, to be the First-born amongst

many brethren, the beginning of the new Spiritual Creation of God. The Scriptures, indeed, are mainly occupied with the gradual assumption of humanity by Deity, with the story of the Divine-human in this world and in the world to come, into which the Saviour vanished from the sight of human eyes. The term 'Son of God' is confined in Scripture to the historic Christ, or the Word *made flesh*, — to the Word *after*, not before, the Incarnation, — and the exaltation and glorification of the man Jesus are expressly attributed to his willing humiliation and self-renunciation; and since these things are what it specially concerns us to know, they make up the chief matters of Revelation. Nevertheless, when we go beyond this world, and seek for absolute realities, the heavenly things which are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, what is the story of Christ but the record of the manifestation in time and space of the Eternal Sonship, the gospel of the assumption of our poor humanity, made in the image of God and yet so mysteriously estranged from Him, into the heavenly places where by Christ God is all

in all? In Christ, the Eternal Son, all things are complete and beautiful."

Sabellianism is an advance towards the full recognition of Deity in Christ, and a confession of the unsatisfactoriness of the Socinian and the Arian theories; but its fatal difficulties, from a Scriptural standpoint, have been conclusively demonstrated by the two Unitarian writers last quoted. Viewed in a practical light, and especially in the light of experience, its weakness is not less apparent; for it presents only a phenomenal Christ, that can never satisfy earnest souls, yearning for a vitalizing, eternal Source with whom they may commune. Rev. S. R. Calthrop has said: * "Historically, all attempts to put the nature of Christ below the nature of God have failed to satisfy religious minds." And we may add, with equal truth and propriety, that a Christ without distinct Divine personality can never satisfy sincere seekers after God. Many Liberalists, therefore, discard the Socinian, the Arian, and the Sabellian theories, as alike faulty and objectionable, and seek for something better.

* Monthly Religious Magazine, 1862, vol. xxvii. p. 257.

V.

The Logos Concession.

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SOME very spiritual and scholarly men in the Liberal bodies, in reaching upward after something more truly divine and positive in the character and person of Christ, have developed what has been designated as "The Logos Doctrine," which is substantially the old "Logos Doctrine" of Orthodox Christianity, with some modifications, particularly dissenting from the Tripersonality of the Trinity. Rev. Dr. E. H. Sears, whose emphatic protest against Arianism has been quoted, was an eminent advocate of this doctrine.

After such a protest against Arianism, and such an earnest demand for a Christ "around whom are gathered all the splendors of the God-head," we are deeply interested to know what theory of the Logos this writer will present. In

the same magazine, for May, 1860,* we find him making a formal statement. He says :

"We understand by the Logos the Divine nature as to its wisdom or revealing truth, that same wisdom which became incarnate in Jesus Christ. It is not a separate attribute hypostatized, *but the whole Divine nature hypostatized*, or come forth into personality, — just as in man, if he be a true one, his intellect and revealing word are the imaging forth of his whole nature to us, so that we may see him as he is. If a man's mind and heart are at one, that is, if his mind be the true mirror of his heart and soul, then his intellect that glows in his countenance and lives in his speech is not *mere* intellect, but a forthgoing and personation of the invisible deep within him. Now the Logos is the Divine Intellect in the act of revelation. The Logos in Christ is God hypostatized and revealed ; and we do not climb round it to get to the Father, any more than we climb round a man's mind and word, as revealed in his speech and person, to get at the invisible depths of his being. 'To worship the Word is to worship God as the Word, i. e.

* Page 292.

to worship God.' Exactly so; and how can we worship Him in any other way, and how can our thoughts 'mount upward to the Father' beyond where the father is hypostatized and revealed? 'All that the Father hath is mine.' 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, that dwelleth in the bosom of the Father,' — the all-revealing and hypostatizing Word, — 'he hath brought Him forth to view.'"

Elsewhere he speaks of the Logos as "the second hypostasis in the Divine nature," as "consubstantial with the Father," "the eternally begotten, Incarnate Word." And lest there should remain any doubt as to whether this writer means to teach the distinct personality as well as the real Divinity of Jesus, we quote from him in another article.* He says:

"That the doctrine of Christ's essential divinity is set forth in the New Testament, yea, that it breaks from its pages in a blaze of glory, is the almost unanimous agreement of Christian believers. In the Incarnation, the Life, and the Mediation of Christ, there is the full expression of the Godhead, the essential Divinity coming

* Monthly Religious Magazine, Feb., 1860, p. 99.

down into visible personality for the salvation of men. Never are we invited to come to the Father by climbing round the personality of the Son. That the essential Divinity in Christ is not a person separated from the Father, another person, but consubstantial with the Father, and revealing the whole Godhead in one glorious person, '*all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,*' is plain even in the letter."

It is evident, therefore, that this writer means something more than Arianism, or the manifestation theory of Sabellius. It is the positive, essential, personal Deity, in Christ.

We quote from the Monthly Religious Magazine for March, 1868, the following emphatic declarations of the divinity of Jesus, and the divine authority of the Christian religion. In an article on "The Oneness of the Four Gospels," one of the editors, showing how Matthew first presents the human side of the character of Jesus, while John closes the gospel story with the most emphatic testimony to his divinity, remarks :

"And this accords with our individual experience. We learn Christ after the flesh

before we learn him spiritually and divinely. We must see him and know him on the side of his natural humanity, a partaker of our nature, a sharer of all our woes and sufferings, or he will not touch our human sympathies and our tenderest love. But we are not likely to rest here. That it is not merely the carpenter's son who has found us and melted the flint from our hearts by such friendship and philanthropy, and such self-abnegation as the world had not known, we begin already to perceive: and when the fourth Gospel draws us upward to a vision of his unveiled divinity, and oneness with the Godhead, we are made conscious of no incongruity in his life and character, but rather of their majestic proportions and harmony."

The writer then having shown from many passages that Matthew's gospel is by no means confined to the humanity of Christ, concludes ■ follows:

"If the reader, however, is in any doubt as to whether the Jesus of the first Gospel is the Christ of the fourth, if he thinks the first may be a man, developed like other men out of the culture of his times, while the other was the

factitious invention of a later day, he can easily bring this matter to the test. Summon the best man you can find, — the most advanced prophet of to-day, and let him stand in the position of this same Jesus, the *mere man* (so claimed) of the first Gospel. Let him see if he can bend his bow, or grasp his thunders. Let some prophet of to-day, who ought to have grown up to the stature of Jesus, the mere human development, declare in the face of the world that no man knoweth the Father but himself, and those to whom *he* shall reveal him; let him assume to sit on a throne of glory with all the holy angels around him, and part the nations to the right hand and the left, to everlasting punishment or to life eternal; let him announce that all power is given to *him* both in heaven and earth; let him put his own name into a formula of baptism, and charge his followers to make disciples in the name of the Father and the Holy Ghost and *himself*! Would the world be converted by such preaching at the rate of three thousand in a day; or would they regard it as self-conceit and self-assertion passed into the stage of monomania and fit only for an asylum for the insane?"

In explaining the Logos Doctrine as he held it, Dr. Sears ■ made other important distinctions, which relieve it from the slightest suspicion of Sabellianism. He said :

“ It affirms an essential distinction in the divine nature of Father and Son, that these are not merely modes of manifestation in time, but were ‘in the beginning,’ and therefore timeless and eternal. God as the Father is the infinite deep of Divine being, beyond finite apprehension, beyond the reach of human thought, what ‘no man hath seen or can see.’ But, left here, we are in blind worship, and can only build an altar to the Unknown. But the Word is God speaking, the Divine Reason in self-revelation.”

Again : † “ The radical Christology, the Humanitarian, the Arian, the Tri-personal, — I know what they all are, ... and reject them. I apprehend, too, the idea of what the Church calls ‘ the hypostatic union,’ — that is, the more interior *union and inexistence of natures*, the divine with the human nature

■ Monthly Religious Magazine, 1871, vol. ii. p. 368.

† *Ibid.*, 1872, vol. i. p. 173.

of Christ, . . . and which I must believe or else set aside the book of John." *

Rev. J. H. Morrison, D. D., in a critique † on Dr. Sears' "Heart of Christ," says of his Logos doctrine: "It is easy to start superficial objections, to say that it is making Jesus God, that it is an absurdity, giving him two natures. But it seems to us that it is the only view that is in harmony with the Scriptures."

Rev. James W. Thompson, D. D., in the *Christian Examiner*, ‡ exalts Christ to essential Deity. He says: "Trinitarians may be led to suppose that we do not 'honor the Son' as really and heartily as we do the Father; that we are unwilling to receive him in his highest character and offices; that we do not render to him that perfect allegiance which sinners who regard him as their all-sufficient Saviour delight to yield. To guard against this misapprehension, we have simply to affirm that we stand, as we think, on the creed of the New Testament. We use the language of the apostles in the sense in

* In this extract the omissions are only personal allusions.

† *Monthly Religious Magazine*, May, 1872, p. 495.

‡ March, 1856, p. 185.

which they use it. There are no terms employed by them to exalt the Saviour that we do not need for expressing our profound sense of the wonderfulness of his nature, the grandeur of his character, and the importance and dignity of his mission. Overwhelmed by the weight of obligation laid upon us by him, no words of man's device, but such only as the Holy Ghost teacheth, can adequately clothe the sentiments of our hearts towards him; and there is no phraseology adopted by prophet, evangelist, or apostle, to assert the magnitude of his office, the majesty of his person, or the momentous consequences involved in the alternative of receiving or rejecting him, that our souls do not spontaneously fill out to the full from their own sure and deep convictions. Does some prophet, seeing in him God manifested, call him 'Immanuel'? Verily, in him God is with *us*. Beholding in vision the miraculous establishment, the strength and wisdom, the peacefulness and perpetuity, of the Messiah's reign, does he name him 'Wonderful, Counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace'? Amen. The prophet cannot go beyond the historian; nay, the historian

and the prophet meet in the mount of holy contemplation, using the same lofty imagery to invest with superhuman attributes the peerless object of their common admiration and praise. Glorifying in the regal majesty and dominion of his Lord, does some raptured saint, with his ear near to God, hear a 'voice from the excellent glory' addressing the Son, — 'Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows'? Even so, amen. *Laudate Dominum.* We rejoice; we exult; we give thanks; we chant our response with the Church, and say, 'God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;' not *homoiousion* with the Arians, but *homoousion* with the Athanasians; and none shall receive a heavier meaning from those divinely loaded words than we. Does some apostolic seer, caught up into the heavens, hear a loud voice proceeding from 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,' of angels, saying, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive

power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory* and blessing'? We would take up and repeat the celestial refrain, 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.' "

But Dr. Thompson commences the next paragraph with these words, "But we can have no Trinity;" and all the foregoing writers are careful to say that they cannot accept the doctrine of Tripersonality in the Godhead. They discard it as essentially Tritheism. The Trinity is a continual offence to them. Tri-unity is an unfathomable mystery, a contradiction, and must therefore be discarded as irrational and absurd.

They speak, however, of "essential Divinity coming down into visible personality," in Christ. Why not with equal propriety speak of "essential Divinity coming into" *invisible* "personality," in the *Holy Spirit*?

Dr. Sears says, "essential Divinity in Christ is not a person separated from the Father, another person, but consubstantial with the Father, and revealing the whole Godhead in one glorious person." What greater stretch of Faith

does it require to say, "essential Divinity, in the" *Holy Spirit*, "is not a person separated from the Father, another person, but consubstantial with the Father, and revealing the whole Godhead in one glorious person"? Dr. Sears says that, in Jesus Christ, "it is not a separate attribute hypostatized, but the whole Divine nature hypostatized, or come forth into personality." Why not with equal propriety say that in the *Holy Spirit*, "it is not a separate attribute hypostatized, but the whole Divine nature hypostatized, or come forth into personality"?

If it is not inconsistent or absurd to speak of "*the Logos*" as "the *second* Hypostasis in the Divine nature," where is the inconsistency or absurdity in speaking of *the Holy Spirit* as the *third* Hypostasis in the Divine nature? If *three* Hypostases are essentially Tritheism, are not *two* Hypostases essentially Ditheism? If *two* personalities may be recognized in the Godhead, without violence to our understandings, may we not with equal consistency speak of *three*? Would not the same method of interpretation and the same measure of faith and spiritual insight that has led to the acceptance of the

doctrine of *two* Divine personalities, lead to the recognition of a *Trinity* of personalities? If Di-Unity, why not Tri-Unity?

In the course of our argument, thus far, every desirable element in the essential, personal Divinity of Christ has been conceded, by various classes of Liberalists, except his proper place in the Trinity. This indicates the remaining step in the discussion.

VI.

The Trinity Concession.

101

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The Trinity Concession.

IT will not be denied that the doctrine of the Trinity implies the Deity of Christ; and, therefore, any concession of the essential truths entering into or underlying the Trinity, is, so far as it goes, a concession in favor of the Deity of Christ. These admissions are not numerous, and have been made with great caution. Some of them are partial concessions, making a very considerable advance towards the doctrine, while others involve its more vital conditions.

The possible truth of Trinitarianism conceded.

In the Introduction of his book on the Concessions of Trinitarians, Rev. John Wilson says: *

“ This much we are willing to concede ; for it is an unquestionable fact, that every good and

* Page 9.

great cause — every truth in science, in morals, or in religion — is liable to be injured by the production of unnecessary and futile evidence. It is therefore not impossible, that, while for its support much of what is insignificant and useless has been adduced, the doctrine itself of a Triune God may yet be true. It is not impossible that the removal of supports that have been placed in the temple of Trinitarianism, — their destruction by the hands of the candid and distinguished of those who worship at its altar, — may have the tendency rather to exhibit the strength and durability of the fabric than the weakness of its foundation."

I. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES CONCEDED.

Rev. H. W. Bellows, D. D.,* is very decided in his opposition to "the Church doctrine of the Trinity," protesting against it as "insulting to common sense, perversive of Scripture, and hostile to freedom of thought and progress;" nevertheless, he makes some admissions, which are valuable, so far as they go, and are peculiarly

* *Christian Examiner*, March, 1869, pp. 221-234.

significant, involving fundamental truths for which Orthodoxy has long contended in its discussion of this protean problem. He concedes,

1. *That threefoldness in the Deity is not an absurdity.*

He says: "There is nothing fanciful or accidental in the threefoldness of God and man; it belongs to the necessary modes of thought, and cannot be got rid of. Philosophy begins its first page with the distinction,—the subject, the object, and the relation between them. Space can only be described by its three dimensions—length, breadth, thickness. And God can be thought of only in his power, his wisdom, or his goodness. He is will, intellect, affection; or energy, wisdom, love; or truth, goodness, beauty; first fair, first good, first wise. There are, too, three kingdoms—animal, mineral, and vegetable; three primary colors—red, yellow, and blue; three chords—thirds, fifths, eighths; three genders—masculine, feminine, and neuter; three parties to the universe—God, nature, man; three sources of knowledge—intuition, experience,

revelation ; three kinds of force — brute, intellectual, spiritual.

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"Such is the triplicity that runs through God, nature, man ; and every main division of either is capable of being reduced to its three grand elements or distinctions.

"It would be strange, indeed, if, with such a constitution of things, there should not be many trinities found in the Bible. Earth, heaven, and hell are one ; . . . the three graces — faith, hope, charity ; the three blessings — grace, mercy, and peace ; the three witnesses — the Spirit, the water, and the blood ; the three members of the Scriptural form of baptism — the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

"Nor is it to be denied, whether the text itself be genuine or not, that the doctrine of 1 John v. 7, is authentic : 'For there are three that bear record in heaven — the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost ; and these three are one.'

"God is here represented under his three characters of source, channel, stream ; original, mediator, and thing communicated ; sovereign,

messenger, message. When God made man, he was his *Father*; when he spoke to him by his Son, he was the Logos or *Word*; when man understood him and received his message and gift, he was the Holy Ghost. And it is manifest that, as the fountain, the channel, and the stream make one river, and so in a certain sense, very circumscribed and intelligible, are *one*; so God, and Christ, the Word and the Holy Spirit, God's inspiration and influence, are one and the same." But he adds: "It is only when we choose to consider them as one and the same for certain purposes, that they are so. God and Christ are one; but they are not exclusively one, any more than any other father and son are exclusively one."

Dr. Bellows also concedes that,

2. *The Trinity is one of the old, universal race truths.*

Referring to 1 John v. 7, he says: "It is not this text, or any number of texts, that keeps the Trinity in its place of respect and importance in the Church and the world; but rather the doctrine itself that keeps the text in counte-

nance. There has always been a trinity in the faith of the world, whether in philosophy, poetry, or theology; and we presume there always will be. Of all religious philosophies, that of the Old and New Testaments contain least of a trinity; any other religion has more of it than the Jewish or Christian, and most systems of speculation a good deal more. Not a fortieth part of the evidence for any such dogma can be brought out of the New Testament, which can be adduced from Platonic philosophy and the pagan scriptures.

"The paucity of authority for a trinity of any sort in the Gospels is to be ascribed to the unphilosophical, unlearned, and practical character of those writings, and to their supreme devotion to the idea of the sole sovereignty and fatherhood and unity of God. It was not until the ardor and force of this original simplicity had expended itself, that a trinity — which, in some form, we might so naturally have expected to find accompanying the original revelation — crept into the mouths of Christian disciples. It was already in their culture, their superstitions, their experience. Christ's plainness and the apostolic simplicity

had repressed it. But it was against experience, history, philosophy, to have a religion without some sort of trinity in it; and therefore, when the Alexandrian philosophers began to mix the Gospel with their Platonism, it was a real relief to the mind and heart of the world. Christianity was corrupted, it is true; but it was popularized. Trinitarianism was probably the only possible form in which the Gospel could have survived the philosophies and false religions which threatened to engulf it."

Dr. Bellows concedes the remarkable "vitality of Trinitarianism, and its survival of the ages of critical light which have sifted the records and the theology of the Church," — that, while "those who deny the scripturality of the Trinity" "account for its origin and spread by pointing to the ancient opinions and proclivities out of which it grew," at the same time "those who assert it find powerful backers in these pre-existent theories," and that "ancient religions and philosophies, in precise proportion to their purity and influence, contained either the germs or the anticipations of the religion of Christ," and "have a claim only second to absolute revela-

tion." He also concedes that the Church doctrine of the Trinity, as to its origin, was "neither purely pagan nor purely Christian; but had, as it seems to us, just enough of both to make it a *convenient and effective vehicle of an everlasting truth* which will survive the vessel that brought it down."

3. *Trinity in Unity ineradicably rooted in the Indo-European mind.*

A writer in the Christian Examiner has said,* that the Indo-European mind, permeated with the idea of manifoldness, received from the Semitic race the divinely inspired idea of one Invisible God, perfect, immanent, and universal. "But we have no belief that any system of unqualified Monotheism, as held by the Jews, will ever prevail, or have a continued existence among the Indo-European races, with whom the idea of plurality is no weaker now than the idea of unity. We are speaking of facts. Read the history of Christendom. The idea of plurality mingles everywhere with the idea of unity. Nor were all the various forms of this idea of mani-

* January, 1863, pp. 58-61.

foldness, which have existed or do exist in Christendom, foisted upon Christianity. Preparation for their development was made by its Founder. Believing, as we do, that the hand of God guides the progress of Christianity, we cannot suppose that his Divine plan has been thwarted for twenty centuries. Christianity, based upon eternal religious principles, has been developing itself continually in the comprehension and consciousness of humanity.

“Modern thought, unfolding and embracing, through science, the unity of nature, the unity of the universe, amid such varied manifoldness, hopes, and may be able, to reach a true conception of the Christian doctrine of Monotheism. God is not divided, but the universe is made one in him. He is present in all, but specially manifest in part. *The doctrine of Trinity in Unity is rooted in the life of the Indo-European races. Will it ever be eradicated? Can it be more than corrected, and placed as a Christian doctrine upon its true philosophical basis?*”

Let these admissions be considered in connection with the fundamental concession laid down at the opening of this discussion.

II. HIGHER CONCESSIONS.

1. *Trinity in Unity not irrational.*

Rev. Hugh Reginald Haweis, of London, represents the Liberal wing of the English clergy. In a volume of Sermons,* he says:

"Is it possible to lay hold of God through the doctrine of the Trinity? Is it possible so to re-state that doctrine as to clear away the difficulties which, in its usual form, it presents to the human understanding in the nineteenth century? I believe it is.

"The first great difficulty usually put forward is the conception of three in one. If there are three things, they are not one. How is this Trinity in Unity to be reconciled with the ordinary laws of thought? First, as regards the intellectual difficulty; it vanishes if you will consent to lift up your eyes and look about you. You are constantly recognizing trinity in unity. It has been frequently shown that diversity in unity is one of the great principles of all life, certainly of all higher life. In almost every pos-

* New York, Holt & Williams, 1872, p. 162, &c.

sible form of human thought you acknowledge a diversity in unity, often a trinity in unity; it reaches right through the whole constitution of the world. If I gaze upon yonder flaming lamp in front of me, I know there is light, there is heat, and I see there is form; and yet the form is not the heat, and the heat is not the light, and the light is neither form nor heat; and yet these three together constitute the flame. You cannot take one away and leave the flame. These are its constituents. Here, these different qualities of light, heat, and form in physical things are one; there is trinity in unity. Throughout the living world there is this kind of diversity in unity.

“Now raise the principle from the platform of things seen and temporal to the sphere of things unseen and eternal; and is it so vast an assumption to say, the great laws of life, which hold good as far as ever we can trace them in this world, extend also beyond it, so that the things on earth are the patterns of the things in the heavens? If the known universe is penetrated with unity, and yet unimaginably glorious in its

diversity, can that which underlies the whole be conceived of either as without variety or without unity? Is it so vast an assumption to say that the Divine Life is in harmony with all other life? When you once grasp the central principle of variety in unity, when you survey the vast array of facts in the known universe—facts in the animal kingdom, facts in the life of communities, facts involved in the very constitution of the human creature, body, mind, and spirit—I say, the doctrine of God's Trinity in Unity presents no difficulties at all."

"But I will go a step further, and I will tell you, my brethren, that when I try to think of God at all, I can only think of Him as Trinity in Unity; and my mind actually refuses to entertain any other conception of God, if I am to think of him at all. . . . Invisible, unknowable as He is, you must yet have some conception of Him; and when that is the case, I maintain that you will, simply in obedience to the constitution of the human mind, think of Him as Trinity in Unity. How so? I will explain."

2. *The doctrine helpful and consolatory.*

Mr. Haweis continues. He says that "Our first idea of God is that of a vast co-ordinating force," "an all-pervading energy," "which brought into form what we call the universe of all created things," — "in the widest sense, the Father."

"The next thought brings us a step nearer. God comes before you under a secondary aspect, cast in the form and found in the fashion of a man. I have often said, if we had no historical Christ at all, no one who had ever come forth as an expression of the Divine mind, and as an expression of God under the limitations of humanity, we should be obliged to make a Christ, because our mind incarnates God in the form of Christ irresistibly and inevitably, whenever we bring definite thought to bear upon the question of a Divine Being in relation to man. And such a Christ, whether ideal or historical, will be the Son of God."

But there is another want. "My soul is athirst for God, for the living God; no clear conception of Him will avail me, if I cannot recruit my nature in Him, if I cannot meet with

him face to face, and be refreshed by communion with him. Ah! in a bodily presence that cannot be; the gross materialism of the Roman Catholic mass is but a parody of the Divine Presence you seek, and of the Divine Presence which you shall surely find; but how? Whenever you are in despondency, in weakness, in misery; when you are profoundly conscious of your infirmities, how shall you get refreshment from the presence of God? By an effluence, like that of radiance from flame, by the Spirit that comes forth from the Father and the Son,—an effluence going into the soul, just as my thought pierces your brain, just as the feeling of human tenderness pierces your heart, subdues you, encircles you, melts you. So His radiant Spirit-effluence subdues, and pierces and melts. And that is the Holy Ghost."

"If you will use the doctrine as I have restated it, you will find it highly consolatory and helpful to you."

This statement, while not fully up to the standard of Orthodoxy, approximates nearer than the merely *modal* semi-Trinitarianism of Sabellius.

Rev. E. H. Sears, D. D., referring to 1 John v. 7, and Matthew xxviii. 19, said : *

“ This meaning certainly unfolds itself from both passages, that in order to have any living experience of the wealth of the Divine Nature, you must know God in a threefold sense. You must know him as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Nay, you have no baptism, no unction from him, no inward cleansing, — for that is what baptism signifies, — unless you know him in his threefold power as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How constantly do we find this truth brought out all through the New Testament ! It is not enough, Christ tells us, to believe in the Father. ‘ He that believeth not on the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.’ ”

Again : “ If we are to honor the Father, not as a speculation, but as a personal friend ; if we would know Christ not as a barren sentiment, but as the transforming Word ; if we are to know God as a living experience that opens through the soul all the riches of his nature, we must have a baptism into the power of the Father,

■ “ Christ in the Life.” Sermon on the Trinity.

and the Son, and the Spirit, — all three; and then the promise of Christ will have its blissful fulfilment: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' "

3. *The doctrine underlaid by great vital truth.*

A writer in the *Christian Examiner*,* after laying down the broad fundamental thesis, declaring that "every doctrine that has been clung to and lived in, through a long series of years, no matter how false its form may be, must have its core in some precious and substantial elements of truth," proceeds to inquire: — "Recognizing this principle, it is an interesting and most important question, *What is the vital truth which underlies the Church doctrine of the Trinity?*" He frankly discards "every statement of the doctrine ever made," as "contradictory" and "unscriptural," while at the same time he confesses that it contains elements of most enduring strength, because of certain vital truths which underly it. He says:

"Again and again its defences have been battered down, and the doctrine itself logically

* January, 1867, p. 86, &c. By Rev. J. C. Kimball.

demolished, yet somehow it has survived all its destructions. It is one of the oldest doctrines of the Church. Nine tenths of the strongest and best Christians that have ever lived have believed it. It is connected with all the great revivals of religion; it is as prominent in all the light of modern science as in the darkest night of the Middle Ages; and is held to-day by the whole Christian world, Protestants as well as Roman Catholics, except a mere handful of Liberals, as a most vital part of its religious faith. What is the secret of its strength? How are we to reconcile our position, as Unitarians, with these undeniable facts of Trinitarianism?"

The writer then quotes Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D. D., as seeking a reconciliation of the difficulty, by supposing "the essential idea that underlies the doctrine of the Trinity to be, that the Deity has made and is evermore making, three distinct and independent revelations of himself; each revelation giving a different view of the Divine Being; each revelation showing God to man under a different aspect," — three manifestations of the same person.

But he asks, "Is this really the vital truth

which underlies the Church doctrine of the Trinity?" He thinks not, and declares that "it is not a truth of Orthodoxy," and that "there is no prevailing statement or conception of the Trinity which lays any stress on God's being manifested in any separate modes. Hence, as an explanation of the vitality there is in the Church doctrine, it entirely fails." And he adds that "the idea of a Trinity of manifestations through nature, Christ, and the soul, is foreign to the phraseology of the Bible," and is "not corroborated by anything which is seen in the world around us."

He contends that "the vital truth of the Trinity lies at once nearer the surface, and is wider-reaching, than this idea of three manifestations." "There is one principle," he says, "one great law," "a key, which unlocks" "the mystery of three persons in the Godhead." "It consists in this.

"The human soul is made, in its very nature, to want in its worship the whole circle of the Divine perfections.

"The spirit, even in its lowest and most groveling state, will not be satisfied with a limited Divine

nature, with that which embodies only one or two or three of the attributes of Deity. It craves them all in some form or other."

Hence we have, first, "the conception of absolute Deity" — the Father, wise, almighty, just, eternal, infinitely exalted in the heavens.

But this was not enough: the human soul needs a nearer, a present, and more tender view of God, loving, merciful, "hating sin and loving the sinner," and touching our humanity, as in Jesus Christ. He says: "The real question is, *how much* of the Divine nature do we get before the soul, not in what *ways* do we get it. And the mere unity of God in that age of the world would have been a bald, unsatisfying faith. Then, too, with the richer, deeper aspirations which Christianity aroused in the human soul, it was inevitable, that, if Christ had not been deified, some other and lower being must have been. It is a curious fact, mentioned by Mrs. Jameson, that, in the Middle Ages, the conception of Christ, as the embodiment of mercy and compassion, was gradually obscured, the idea of him as a stern judge taking its place. And what was the result? Why, the human soul could not give up

the worship of these divine qualities, and the Virgin Mary was endowed with them, and made the object of the people's adoration. She is represented, in paintings of that period, as the pure, tender, loving woman, interceding before her Son, just the same as Christ had been before the Father, for the welfare of our lost race. . . . Protestant theology restored Christ to his original place, as the embodiment of grace and mercy. *It shows how inevitably the soul must have these qualities somehow in its conception of Deity, and is the most striking confirmation that this is, indeed, a vital thing in the doctrine of the Trinity.'*

The third person in the Trinity of Orthodoxy meets another need of the human soul — direct, spiritual contact and communion with God. He says:

"Another truth which underlies it is the immediate presence of God in the world, and with the soul. It matters not how exalted and pure and immaterial we consider him to be, how far removed from men in the grandeur and holiness of his character, there is one part of his personality, the *Holy Spirit*, not a dim influence, but God

himself, that is taught as pervading the world, and dwelling most intimately in the human heart. *It is a most glorious truth.* There was never anything in the polytheistic conception of religion, with all the earthly locality which it assigned its gods, no lares or penates presiding over the household, no idol in its shrine, no image carried on the breast, which brought the divine so near, so immediate to the world, as the Church doctrine of the Spirit. We ourselves are his temples. He warns, directs, convinces, comforts. His breath is our inspiration. Our joy is in his touch. And through him we mount up, ever and ever, to the higher life."

4. *The doctrine eulogized.*

The same writer continues: "*It is impossible to estimate too highly what the value of this truth has been through all the Christian ages. It has been the connecting link between the Father, removed far off in dim eternity, and his children here on earth; the only way in which the faith, if not the heart, of the Church could have had a present God.* And the intellectual fiction of a divided personality, by which it has been accomplished, has

been a slight matter, in comparison with *the greatness and worth of the truth which has been within it.*"

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"All past experience shows that to attack the Trinity, — or *what is now becoming the chief point in the doctrine, the Deity of Christ,* — on its logical side, is utterly in vain. It is clung to in face of the clearest demonstrations of its untruth. *It somehow feeds the soul, gives it the fullness of the Divine nature ; and what avails it to prove by argument that food is dust and ashes, when millions of beings are using it every day, and finding it gives them grandest health and strength.*"

5. *The problem Liberalists have set for themselves to solve.*

The same writer continues: "It is these facts about the Trinity which suggest the true method of doing our Unitarian work." Admitting that "all past experience shows that to attack the Trinity, — or what is now becoming the chief point in the doctrine, the Deity of Christ, — on its logical side, is utterly in vain," he proceeds to say:

“The only way is to make sure that all the truth which is in their doctrine is furnished likewise in ours. There is nothing in the logical form of the Trinity which its believers care for. There are thousands of them who cannot repeat its terms, and scarcely any two, even of its scholars, who define it in the same way. It is *the underlying truth* which makes them hold it.”

“We need to show that all the Divine attributes, all which the soul craves for of God, inhere, and must inhere, in the one person of the Father; and to insist that the whole of that one person is here on the earth, is ready to dwell in the humblest soul, as truly as in the heavens. We want to show, not by demonstration merely, but actually, experimentally, that our faith can afford as much of Deity and the Divine nature, and bring men as truly into communion with the Eternal Spirit, as that of the Trinity. It is only so far as we can do this, only so far as we can show that all which is vital in their system belongs just the same to ours, that they ought to take it, that the world will really be the better for their having it.”

VII.

The Final Concession.



*The Deity of Christ, the Great, Satisfying, and
Vitalizing Truth of Christianity.*

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WE have just noticed the problem which Liberalists have set for themselves to solve, — “to show, not by demonstration merely, but actually, experimentally,” that their “faith can afford as much of Deity and the Divine nature and bring men as truly into communion with the Eternal Spirit as that of the Trinity.”

Only four years ago, Rev. Samuel P. Putnam, D.D., in the *Monthly Religious Magazine*,* confessed that it is still “an unsolved problem of Unitarianism,” “to find a form of truth that shall make God as near and helpful to the soul as the Orthodox doctrine of the Deity of Jesus.” He

* February, 1874, pp. 134-136.

said: "However absurd this doctrine is to the understanding, it is wonderfully sweet to the heart. . . . The accurate Unitarian may call Jesus the Son of God, a noble man; but this does not make him nearly so inspiring to the common heart as to call him the Absolute God. It may be shown that this doctrine is illogical and contrary to the words of Jesus and his disciples, yet millions cling to it with a tender tenacity. Think how precious indeed Jesus must be to those who really believe him God. Discrown him of this infinite splendor, and how small and meagre he looks! For when made less than God he is made infinitely less. Orthodoxy flouts reason; but it conquers the feeling. It is in fact based upon the profoundest needs of humanity. It appeals to man's fears, and hopes, and aspirations. It makes God dreadful, yet at the same time loving; wrathful, yet wonderfully tender; a sovereign, yet a brother, a friend, a companion, a helper. It will not do to sneer at Orthodoxy; nor can it be overthrown by cold criticism. Not much is accomplished when it is proved that Jesus is not God. When we do this, he ceases to be a central fact, a leader, a

Saviour. Only God in his infinitude can be these; only he can satisfy our innermost needs. No finite being, however perfect and glorious, can do it."

Rev. E. H. Sears, D.D., in his capacity as editor of the *Monthly Magazine** of the Unitarian denomination, while avowedly dissenting from Tri-personality in the Godhead, nevertheless, with great positiveness, set forth the practical value of the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, and most eloquently discoursed upon the vital connection between this doctrine and the richest Christian experience:—

"In days of darkest corruption, and amid the most awful wickedness of an apostate Church, there have been multitudes who have lived and died in the sanctity of a genuine faith. And what has been the doctrine which has laid hold upon them and saved them? We believe it will be found to have been the essential Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, ... offering the Divine Person to the humble believer. This has been the saving element which

* February, 1860, pp. 106-108.

no corruptions could completely overlay. It is a personal vital union of the disciple with his Saviour that causes the Divine Life to pass into him and transform him into the divine image, and produce, from within, outwardly, not a putative, but a genuine righteousness."

"When we are weak or cowardly in the face of duty, or braced up only by the pride of self or the fear of man, it is rest in that almighty friendship that gives both the docility of the child and the strength of a multitude of martyrs. There is other virtue that is hardy and brave, austere, and sometimes cruel, for the cause and glory of God. This, from the living and indwelling Christ, has both the tenderness and omnipotence of Him who breathes it into us; for its strain of acknowledgment is, 'Thy gentleness hath made me great.' This has been the renewing power of Christianity, and wrought all the graces, and the righteousness, and the zeal, and the piety distinctively Christian; for this is where God meets the soul and has his tabernacle with men. This is the door through which he comes and floods

the heart with his strength and love. This made Methodism a saving and regenerating power, while the other Churches lay high and dry on the sands of faith alone. It works the deepest and richest Christian experience. It breathes and quivers through Moravian hymns. It shows man all the depths and windings of his depravity; and, in the same measure supplies God's inexhaustible grace. It gives him the peace that flows in like a river, and fertilizes all his nature, as earthly fountains are becoming dry. It gives the Christian Church all the efficiency which it has for positive good in society."

BOOK SECOND.
THE ATONEMENT.



I.

The Issue.

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WE come to the consideration of that august and central event in the world's history — the mysterious and affecting agony borne for the world's sin — whose relations are closely interwoven with the principles by which God governs and saves mankind, and whose significant insignia have rendered the Cross the universal symbol of Christendom.

The sufferings and death of Christ have been variously estimated by Liberalists.

Some have regarded them in the light of what was suitable and fitting — “a consistent and exemplary termination of a blameless and miraculous career;”

Others, as intended “for his own improvement” — that he “might become perfect through sufferings;”

Others, ■ "affording a bright example of patience in death ;"

Others, as designed "to evince the sincerity of his teachings," and "to establish the truth of his doctrines ;"

Others, rising a little higher in the contemplation of this memorable event, view it in the light of "a noble martyrdom" — "a sublime example of self-sacrificing love."

In the estimation of these classes, the death of Christ has no direct bearing upon the salvation or moral elevation of men, except as an example of sublime devotion and love ; and it takes away sin, not by any sacrificial efficacy, but by influencing the mind of the sinner to abandon it. They contend that the terms "redeem" and "ransom" have no fixed sense, but simply imply a deliverance through a moral influence exerted upon men to induce them to break away from their bondage.

The Socinian affirms that we have redemption through Christ "because we are led by due consideration of his death to that repentance, which under the merciful constitution of the Divine government, obtains forgiveness." The Arian

represents Christ's labors and sufferings as "acts of the most disinterested and tender philanthropy, in reward and honor of which he is allowed to bestow pardon upon those who are constrained to penitence, and to plead his interest with God, who delights to honor the generous conduct of his Son."

Sometimes we find Liberalists, even in the midst of a controversy on this subject,—as in the case of the editor of the *Christian Inquirer*, some years ago, in a long discussion with one of the editors of the *Independent*,—apparently taking much higher ground, saying, "Jesus our Lord is exhibited to us, as far more than a teacher of wisdom, or a pattern of virtues, or a heroic martyr suffering wrongfully, or a moral reformer, or an inspired man, or a religious genius." "Nothing can be plainer than that the general representation of the New Testament is that the effect of the blood of Christ is to purify the human heart, soften it, renew it, re-create it, purge the conscience, cleanse the soul."

We are at first inclined to accept this statement as satisfactory; but, reading further, we find this same writer saying, not casually, but

in a formally stated proposition, "Jesus came, by his person, his sufferings, and his cross, to *persuade* man of this very truth, that, *if he will repent* of his sins, God is willing to forgive him and accept him of his free grace." It becomes evident, then, that, in the view of this writer, the effect of the "sufferings," and "cross," of Christ is simply *persuasive*, and the "purification of the heart," the "purging of the conscience," &c., which he ascribes to the blood of Christ, is effected not by any sacrificial efficacy of his death, nor by supernatural power, but by its *persuasive influence*, constraining men to abandon their sins. Subsequently he distinctly declares, that "the method through which the death of Christ works its redeeming effects is by moral influence."

In these views we see much to accept; indeed, we can accept them almost wholly, so far as they go. Christ's death was truly "a consistent termination of a blameless career," "a bright example of patience," a convincing "evidence of the sincerity of his teachings," "a sublime example of self-sacrificing love." We agree with the Socinian, that we are led by "due considera-

tion of Christ's death to that repentance which obtains forgiveness;" and with the Arian, that, in honor of his disinterested love, Christ "is allowed to bestow pardon upon those who are constrained to penitence;" and with some of the more spiritual of modern liberalists, that the effect of the blood of Christ is to purify the heart, to soften and renew it; and we can accept also almost all that is positive, in what is known as "the moral-influence theory of the atonement."

In three vital points, however, in which nearly all liberalists agree, we feel constrained to differ from them. They claim:

1. That the death of Christ exerts no God-ward influence, and discard all governmental ends connected with it;

2. That its influence upon man is only a moral impression — a moral suasion — leading him to repentance; and,

3. That sin is pardoned, not on the ground of Christ's atoning or expiatory death, but by Divine prerogative.

On the other hand, Evangelical Christianity *denies*, that prerogative is the ground of pardon for sin, and the death of Christ only a means of

moral suasion to lead to repentance;— but it *affirms*, that Christ's death is the central and the centralizing fact of the Bible ;

That it is a most wonderful exhibition of Divine compassion and love, from which it had its origin ;

That it also exhibits the inconceivable hostility of the Divine nature to sin, and the hideousness and heinousness of human disobedience and self-will ;

That it is a sacrificial offering for sin, a satisfaction to Divine rectitude, and the only safe basis for pardon ;

That, as a governmental expedient, it was provided to vindicate the Divine righteousness, in pardoning transgressors ;

That it infolds vital spiritual realities, a quickening, transforming, and peace-giving power, nowhere else to be found ; and,

That its ulterior design is to make men holy, righteous.

Girded about with the sacred sanctity of law, penetrated with the sternest conceptions of justice, oppressed with appalling views of evil, and heavily laden with the burden of the world's woe,

but moved and sustained by the tenderest love, Christ Jesus, a unique personage, sustaining such unique relations, under the concentrated gaze of the universe, accomplished a most unique transaction ; and, as “ the propitiation for our sins,” substituted in the place of the literal penalty, sufferings so pure, so exquisite, so full of abhorrence at sin and of sympathy with Divine righteousness, so death-bearing to himself and life-giving to others, as to be equivalent, yea, more than equivalent, to the infliction of the penalty upon the actual transgressor.

Such are substantially the views of evangelical theologians. The central thought, and the chief point of divergence from liberalists, is *expiation*,—not in the low sense of appeasing, but legally and morally,—a necessity to rectoral integrity, to the moral welfare of the universe, and to the ethical nature of God.

This doctrine has been denounced, by liberalists, as “ absurd, unworthy of the acceptance of rational minds,” &c., and sternly stigmatized as the “ blood-theology ;” but some have made generous concessions in its favor, yielding many of the vital points in the controversy.

II.

The Expiatory View conceded to be substantially Scriptural.

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A WRITER in the *Monthly Religious Magazine*,* after freely quoting passages of Scripture referring to Christ's death, says:

“Has the death of Christ, then, nothing to do in obtaining for us the forgiveness of sins? Has not God, through the very mission and mediation of his divine Son, expressed that in his holy counsels we can obtain salvation in no other way?

“We are familiar with the expositions usually given to these passages, and others of a similar import, by leading Unitarians; but we confess that they have never fully satisfied us; for they have often seemed to be explained to suit some preconceived theory,—to react, as it were,

* A Unitarian periodical, 1856, vol. xv. p. 360.

against Orthodoxy, rather than ■ setting forth the full meaning of the Divine truth, ■ expressed by Christ and his apostles."

Rev. F. H. Hedge,* D. D., while holding that much of the Scripture language referring to Christ's death is figurative, and that its effects ~~are~~ subjective, nevertheless acknowledges that "the Jehovah of the Hebrews is represented as propitiated by sin-offerings and trespass-offerings, which the priest was required to offer with exact and complicated rites for the sins of the people, that they might be remitted. For, without blood, by the law of Moses, there was 'no remission.' The writers of the New Testament, and especially the writer to the Hebrews, transfer this idea of sacrifice from the old dispensation to the new. They represent the blood of Christ as the substitute for the blood of bullocks and of lambs."

In a criticism on Rom. iii. 21-26, Professor George R. Noyes,† D. D., of the Cambridge Divinity School, substantially concedes that the Orthodox theory of expiation is taught by St. Paul.

* Reason in Religion, (Roberts Bros., 1875,) p. 334.

† Christian Examiner, September, 1855, p. 276.

“ Paul thus intimates that the blood of Christ constitutes him a propitiatory sacrifice, but that it is the faith of the Christian that makes it his sacrifice — a sacrifice for his benefit. So Conybeare, Alford, Meyer, and DeWette.

“ In adopting the rendering ‘*propitiatory sacrifice*,’ we again remark, that, if we could follow our theological bias, we should choose the rendering ‘*mercy seat* ;’ and in this case we should have the support of numerous Calvinistic as well as Unitarian critics. Any one who will turn to *ἱλαστήριον*, in Robinson’s or Schleusner’s Lexicon, will see that the term, in itself considered, admits of either translation, according as *θύμα*, *sacrifice*, or *ἐπιθεμα*, *cover*, is supposed to be the implied noun to be connected with the adjective *ἱλαστήριον*. But as the death of Christ is, in several passages of the New Testament, compared to a sacrifice, and never to the mercy-seat, unless this passage be an exception, we believe, with Professor Stuart and most modern critics, that ‘*propitiatory sacrifice*’ is the true rendering. Besides, it cannot be denied that *ἱλαστήριον* is capable of being rendered *mercy-seat* only because it denotes literally the *propitiatory lid*, or

cover of the ark of the covenant; and this lid or cover was propitiatory, only because the blood of a sacrificed animal was sprinkled upon it. So that it is doubtful whether there will be much difference in the general meaning, whichever translation may be preferred, *whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory cover, or propitiatory sacrifice.*"

That distinguished biblical scholar, Gesenius, who cannot be suspected of "Orthodox" tendencies, says of the 53d chapter of Isaiah: "Most Hebrew readers, who had once been acquainted with offerings and *substitution*, must necessarily understand the words of our chapter as asserting it; and there is *no doubt* that the *apostolic representation, in respect to the propitiatory death of Christ*, rests, in a manner altogether pre-eminent, on this ground."

In the Monthly Religious Magazine,* a Unitarian layman, over the signature "Selden," wrote:

"We find, all through the New Testament, copious language which represents Jesus Christ ■ ■ 'Redeemer,' a 'sacrifice,' a 'ransom,' and

* 1856, vol. xv. pp. 322, 323.

much besides, that corresponds, in addition, to the whole sacrificial apparatus of the Mosaic dispensation. I ask, what is the obvious, common-sense interpretation of these terms; whether, if we should meet them in a legal document or in common conversation, we should think it good law, or honest reason, to define them as signifying 'taking away (sin) by influencing the (sinner's) mind;' whether 'redeem' and 'ransom' have not a perfectly clear and fixed sense, as implying something apart from moral influence, something paid over or done, in behalf of another, to procure his release from punishment or subjection? In short, I ask, whether, supposing the Unitarian idea to prevail throughout Christendom, to-day, you suppose it would be possible to produce originally out of it, without absurdity and falsehood, the Scriptural language that is used on this subject."

The editor of this periodical wrote: *

"Whenever the instructors of the Unitarian Churches refuse to admit that there can be any other view of the reconciliation than that which makes it consist in the exemplary and incidental

* Monthly Religious Magazine, 1856, vol. xv. p. 120.

value of a consistent termination of a blameless and miraculous career, in a human Christ, many of those they have been called to teach will turn elsewhere for spiritual nourishment, as some are already doing. Indeed, in proportion as the heart is impressed more and more deeply with the two great facts which create the necessity of mediation and redemption — viz., the immaculate holiness and sovereignty of God or the irreconcilable hostility of the divine nature to sin, and the intense hatefulness, and hideousness, and heinousness of human disobedience and self-will — just in that proportion will the above-mentioned doctrine of reconciliation prove as incompetent as it is unevangelical."

Another writer, in the same magazine,* said :

"It is no new conviction with us, neither is the avowal of it recent, that many Unitarian writers, in opposing what they have considered the erroneous and extreme theory of the vicarious atonement, have not done entire justice to the representations of the New Testament with regard to the necessity, the value, and the power, of Christ's sufferings and death. The

* 1856, vol. xv. p. 407, &c.

views they have usually presented have fallen short of the fair weight and significance of the Scriptural language. Set over against and compared with the powerful and suggestive words of the Apostles and evangelists, we must conscientiously confess, we think their interpretations of them appear tame and feeble. Their deductions are too weak to sustain the pressure of those weighty sentences, too contracted and too cold to contain and respond to the fullness and the fervor of the language of inspiration.

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“The language used by the sacred writers, in speaking of the sufferings and death of Christ, is most striking, impressive, and suggestive, — sometimes literal and sometimes figurative, sometimes clear and sometimes obscure, but invariably strong, deep, and fervid. *The most earnest representatives of the necessity and the efficacy of the Cross to the redemption of mankind, which have ever come from an Orthodox pulpit, are fully sustained by the phraseology of the Apostles.* Whether the sacrificial terms they employed have been rightly understood or not by those who have been most fond of borrowing them, the Apostles, and

not their imitators, are responsible for the connection of those terms, and the peculiar ideas they suggest, with the Saviour's death. It is they who have called Christ 'our sacrifice,' 'a sin-offering,' 'a propitiation for our sins.' It is they who have declared that 'He was made sin for us, who knew no sin;' that he suffered for us, 'the just for the unjust;' that 'he died for all,' who else were virtually dead; that he hath purchased the Church with his own blood; and that 'his blood cleanseth from all sin.' While these texts, and such as these, are found scattered over the pages of the New Testament,—coloring, indeed, the whole current of its language,—it should be remembered that the burden of proof rests upon those who would explain away their obvious meaning, and divest the doctrine of the Cross of the drapery which they have thrown around it. Nor is the responsibility, in such a case, to be lightly estimated, nor is the work undertaken an easy one. If, in one instance, the apparent sense of a text, of the class alluded to, is explained away, you are met directly by another, which puts your critical ingenuity to a severer test; and when all is done that your

hermeneutical skill can devise, the *general tone* of the New Testament still remains, interposing a new difficulty, and weakening, with common readers, the force of your labored interpretations."

"Still greater is the responsibility, and still less successful and influential must be the course, of those who appear inclined to leave such texts, as far as possible, out of view, in preaching and in religious conversation; who make but occasional and indifferent allusions to them, as if they were of comparatively feeble significance and little use; who resolve them into mere figures of speech, or antiquated, obsolete, and anile notions; or who boldly thrust them aside in the mass.

"You may treat them thus, if you have the disposition, or, in the face of the apostles and the concurrent sentiment of the Church, the hardihood to do so; but such treatment of them will only react upon yourself, to overthrow your theory of Christianity, and rebuke your presumption. For there they stand, broadly conspicuous and immovably fixed in the sacred word which is to endure unaltered and unalterable through the

ages ; there they stand, and when you and your feeble words have passed away into silence and been forgotten, there they will stand forever, to impress future generations of reverent believers as they have impressed the past, to stir the profoundest thought of the highest intellects as to the sacred meaning they cover, and to appeal to the deepest emotions of the human heart, as they ever have appealed on behalf of the wonderful and most gracious method of salvation which God hath provided through the sufferings of his dear Son."

III.

Expiation conceded a Governmental
Necessity.

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Expiation conceded a Governmental Necessity.

THIS is the point from which there have been the widest and most radical divergences between the evangelical and the liberal sects, the latter generally regarding the death of Christ as exerting a moral influence in reconciling the sinner to God, and denying any necessity for it on God's part. While the more extreme governmental theories among us have undergone some modifications, yet the necessity of the Atonement, as an expedient of God's moral government, is still firmly held; and we are glad to see it recognized, in any measure, however guarded, by our liberal friends.

The effect of the death of Christ not merely subjective.

Rev. William R. Alger* has said: "In Paul's doctrine of the redeeming work of Christ, we recognize something distinct from any subjective effect, in animating and purifying the hearts and lives of men. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.' 'In Christ we have redemption, through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' Nothing but the most desperate and outrageous exegesis can make these and many similar texts signify simply the purging of individual breasts from their offences and guilt. Seeking the genuine meaning of Paul himself, regardless of consequences, we are forced to agree with the overwhelming majority of the critics and believers of all Christendom, from the very times of the Apostles till now, and declare that these passages refer to an outward deliverance of men by Christ, the removal by him of a common doom resting on the race in consequence of sin."

Professor George R. Noyes, while discarding

* Christian Examiner, March, 1853, p. 219.

some things which Orthodox theologians now discard, nevertheless concedes very much in favor of the governmental view of the necessity of expiation. After explaining Romans iii. 21-26 as teaching the doctrine of propitiatory sacrifice, he says: * "This propitiatory sacrifice of Christ Paul does not define. But he tells us plainly what was in part his design. It was that of *manifestation*. It was expressive of the Divine mind. Its design on the part of God, as a fact in his supreme government of the world, was to accomplish what the Jewish sacrifices had accomplished in a less perfect manner; namely, to manifest his righteousness; to show that he was a righteous Being, a being not indifferent to the moral conduct of men.

"Such a signal manifestation of God's righteousness was given when he set forth his own Son to be a propitiatory sacrifice. His estimate of the evil of sin was to be inferred from the cost at which he undertook to deliver men from it. 'He spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a peculiar

* Christian Examiner, September, 1855, pp. 276, 277.

people zealous of good works.' Would he have done it unless he had regarded iniquity as the most terrible of all evils, and righteousness the object of his supreme love? Such was the incidental significance of the death of Christ, considered as an event under God's moral government of the world, in addition to its direct moral consequences, as the seal of his ministry and the consummation of his mission, in establishing his religion in the minds and hearts of men."

A writer* in the Monthly Religious Magazine said: -

"He (Christ) was sent not only in the likeness of sinful flesh, but FOR SIN. It was the object of his coming to endure suffering brought on him by the SIN of others; to set at work special instrumentalities for the removal of SIN from the world; to condemn and subjugate sin in the flesh; to free the soul from the sense of unpardoned sin, and to deliver forever from its power."

Rev. William G. Eliot, D. D., of St. Louis, one of the most eminent and highly respected ministers of the Unitarian denomination, in a

* July, 1864, p. 437.

discourse on the Atonement,* in which the "moral suasion" view largely predominates, proclaims some things on the governmental or Godward side of the atonement, which we seldom find in Unitarian writings. He says:

"The Gospel dispensation, in which we include the sufferings and death of Christ, has made it safe that sin should be forgiven, under God's moral government, in a sense in which it might not otherwise have been safe. The two essential requisites to make pardon safe are these: first, to secure in the offender such a disposition as will lead him to a true and permanent reformation; and secondly, to maintain the sanctity of the law so that it shall not be brought into contempt, but that, while the sinner is forgiven, his abhorrence of sin may be increased, and the heinousness of sin, in God's sight, be made more plainly to appear. When these two requisites are attained, forgiveness of sin becomes safe. It is safe to the sinner himself, because his reformation is secure; it is safe to the moral government of God, because his law is

* See Eliot's "Doctrines of Christianity," published by American Unitarian Association, 1873, p. 122, &c.

not brought into contempt, but is honored even more highly.

"The manner in which pardon is brought to the sinner is the most dreadful condemnation of sin. It is offered to us at the expense of so much suffering, that when we read the account of it, we lament our sins, by which it was made necessary, more bitterly than at any other time. If it had been proclaimed from heaven that God is ready to forgive the repenting sinner, the message would have been the same that we have now received, but how different would have been the effect! We might then indeed have supposed that sin is a light evil, and its record easily blotted out. When we read the narrative of Christ's sufferings, we perceive how heinous sin must be in the sight of God; our consciences are awakened to discover how terrible its consequences must be, here and hereafter. If it were a small evil, if escape from it were easy, if its consequences were temporary and trivial, would the Heavenly Father have appointed his holy child Jesus to a life of such suffering, and to a death of such agony for its removal? We think not; nay, we are sure it could not be."

Subsequently he inquires, "In what sense did Christ die for us?" He replies: "That Christ suffered for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Whatever is expressed more than these words imply is figurative, and not literal. The sufferings and death of Christ were necessary as a means of our redemption from sin; they were therefore endured in consequence or on account of our sins; they were our ransom, the price paid for us, the cost of our deliverance. 'The chastisement of our peace was laid upon him,' because this was the means through which our peace was obtained. 'By his stripes we are healed,' because the healing of our souls, in the forgiveness of our sins, is the result of that dispensation of which his sufferings were a needful part. 'We are washed in his blood,' because the shedding of his blood leads to our cleansing. He suffered and died in our stead, (although this is not a Scriptural expression,) because *his* sufferings and death save *us* from condemnation. There is a plain and real sense in which I can use that word (vicarious), for it is true that Christ suffered *for us*, and by this means, through the grace of God, we escape the suffering which

our sins would otherwise have brought upon us. If he had not come upon earth and fulfilled his ministry, we must have died in our sins, for we are not able to guide ourselves nor save ourselves, and it is through him alone that we come near to God."

In the language of another of the more evangelical of the Unitarian ministers:* "We must remember that man must be saved in a manner consistent with all the attributes of God, and conducive to the glory of all his perfections—not of his mercy only, but of his justice also, and his holiness. He is the Lawgiver and Governor of the universe: his moral laws are holy, just, and good; they are the expression of his righteous will, the transcript of his own perfect nature; they are the everlasting pillars of his vast moral kingdom; they are essential to the order, virtue, harmony, and highest happiness of his subjects. They must be sustained; they must be vindicated; they must be magnified. It would be no more consistent with mercy than with justice to allow them to be broken, to suffer them to be violated by men with a feeling

■ *Monthly Religious Magazine*, 1856, vol. xv. p. 416.

of security against the penalty, to authorize any such expectations of lenity as would not put an effectual restraint upon transgression, or ■ would diminish in the disobedient heart ■ salutary dread of the divine displeasure, and of awful tribulation, as the inevitable result of wilful and continuous sin. This would be weakness and not mercy. As well might the Supreme Ruler throw away his sceptre ; as well might the august Judge step down from the throne of justice, and strip himself of his robes of judgment. The moral universe would go to ruin. The rebellious wills of his subjects—how tremendous they are, and, even now, with how much difficulty curbed and kept in submission!—would rend heaven and earth with discord and confusion, if the great Sovereign should relax his rule, or suffer his righteous mandates to be lightly violated.”

“‘But the object of the divine law is not *revenge*.’ The object of its penalty is to put restraint upon its offences, to exhibit God’s abhorrence of wrong, with awful testimony and warning against transgression, and thus secure the interests of virtue. ‘If, now, virtue be in

the best manner promoted and sin restrained by the death of Christ, and the consequences that necessarily flow from it, then the great object of the divine law and its penalties is promoted in the most effectual manner.' And is not this object thus answered in a higher degree than it could have been, either by inflicting the penalty, or by remitting the penalty altogether, without any most impressive manifestation of the divine displeasure, or any fearful exhibition of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, such as has been presented to the world in the sufferings and crucifixion of the spotless Lamb of God?

"For ourselves, then, we believe, with the great body of the Church of all ages, that the Cross of Christ was necessary in order to the salvation of mankind; that man could have been redeemed, ransomed from the dominion of sin, restored to God, entirely reconciled and at one, his heart thoroughly cleansed from evil affections, and filled with filial love,—a new creature, created anew in Christ Jesus, after the holy image of God,—only by a suffering Redeemer."

IV.

*The Expiatory View conceded a Radical
Moral Necessity.*

IV.

The Expiatory View conceded a Radical Moral Necessity.

LIBERALISTS, being generally advocates of “the moral-influence theory” of the atonement, have discoursed very sentimentally upon the sufferings of Christ; but the following Unitarian writer* penetrates more deeply into the heart of this truth, as held by evangelical theologians:

“*Why* was it necessary that Christ should suffer? Why was it not possible that that cup should pass from him? It was not necessary because it was *arbitrarily* appointed by God; but it was appointed by God *because* it was necessary — necessary to accomplish the end for which it was to take place. It was not rendered

* Monthly Religious Magazine, June, 1856, p. 412, &c.

necessary by any *want* of mercy in God, — it was provided *by* his mercy ; not by any unwillingness to release his debtors, — it was his own plan for their release ; not from any stern desire to punish them for their sins, — it was designed to purge away their sins. Why, then, was Christ's death necessary to man's redemption ? It is an interesting inquiry, leading far into the heart of the Scriptural doctrine of the atonement."

Then, after discussing man's moral condition and the gradual development of the redemptive plan, he says :

"Here, then, in this foreknown and actual result of man's creation, the Scriptures point us to seek the *ground* of the necessity of a suffering Mediator. Reason and conscience would not do : man had possessed them from the beginning ; but reason had become darkened, and conscience defiled. Instruction would not do : it had been reiterated, by wise and good teachers, in countless forms and incessant strains. Prophets would not do : they had succeeded each other in almost unbroken line ; and not only were their efforts of reform unavailing, but them-

selves were resisted and slain. Divine favors and blessings would not do: these had descended, from the first, in copious showers. Threats and punishments would not do: these had been again and again visited upon individuals and nations, — sometimes, with tremendous emphasis, whole nations being swept from the face of the earth, by fire and flood, for their sins; but all in vain. Men's hearts quailed for a moment, but sin kept its dominion; and after four thousand years, in spite of all these methods of correction and conversion, men, with few exceptions, grew worse and worse, wandered farther and farther away from God and holiness, and the whole earth was filled with idolatry and guilt.

“Here is the ground of the necessity of a suffering Redeemer from heaven. All other methods to extirpate sin from the human heart had failed. Unless God had some more powerful instrumentality in store, to rouse the conscience, to deepen the conviction of sin, to penetrate and strike through the heart, to soften its obduracy, to stir its relentings, to touch the springs of its higher and purer affections, to win

back its love to virtue and himself, the world was virtually lost. What instrument powerful enough could be found? What motive mighty enough could be provided? Can any other be imagined, can any other be conceived of, except that which Divine Wisdom and Mercy and Justice ordained before the foundation of the world, and which was actually applied, when the beloved Son of God left the heavenly glory which he had with the Father, and, coming down to earth in the form of a servant, bore our sorrows, took upon himself the load of our sins, was despised and rejected of men, endured for us the mysterious agony of Gethsemane, offered his meek head to the crown of thorns, and gave himself up to the shame and anguish of the cross?

"We must bear in mind the truth, that the sinful world, in order to be saved, would need not only to be *forgiven*, but *cleansed from sin*. God might be willing to withhold the infliction of any *arbitrary* punishment, and yet the *natural consequences* of guilt would remain, in the sense of shame and the diseased nature of the sinner, which could not be removed without doing

violence to all the laws of man's moral constitution, and without the destruction of his moral freedom, except by some mighty instrumentality that should act upon the human heart with tremendous power, and yet in conformity to the laws of its nature. In order to the redemption of the world, not only must sinful acts, every one and all of them, be forgiven to each man and all men, but the evil principle itself in human nature must be conquered and extirpated, and the principle of a perfect righteousness and holiness be implanted in its stead. It is not enough that God would forgive sin, whether on the condition of repentance or without repentance. More, far more, than this is necessary to save the world. Man must be made positively holy and righteous; he must be secured against future acts of sin; he must be inwardly washed from defiling desires and inclinations; he must be filled with pure and godly affections; he must be created anew into the moral likeness of his heavenly Father. Forgiveness could not do this, even in connection with repentance; but, if it could, how is repentance, *such* repentance, — amounting to regeneration and sanctification, —

to be *produced* in men? Has it been produced ever, or, if ever, has it been generally produced in men, or was it likely to be, or, indeed, could it have been, without the powerful instrumentality of the preaching of the cross?"

V.

The Expiatory View conceded a Spiritual
Necessity.

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177

V.

The Expiatory View conceded ■ Spiritual Necessity.

THE acknowledgments of this most vital point in "Evangelical" Christianity, by a few Liberalists, are very rich and ample. A writer in the Monthly Religious Magazine * says:

"From the spiritual experience of those with whose secret life we are in any degree conversant, and especially from the free utterance of the wants, longings, and desires of some just entering upon mature years, the thought has again presented itself, that there is a life and a power in the Gospel of Christ to meet such needs, and to satisfy such longings, which much that has passed under the name of a Unitarian faith and teaching has either silently left out of view, or, in some quarters, wholly ignored.

"Where Christ is presented to the mind sim-

■ May, 1856, p. 359, &c.

ply ■ a perfect moral teacher and guide, and his death regarded merely ■ ■ noble martyrdom, ■ the necessary consummation of his life-devotion to his mission and principles, — its only efficacy consisting in its sublime example of self-sacrificing love, like that of Paul or Peter, or any other noble martyr, — we cannot but feel that an actual wrong is done to the soul ; and the time will come, in some deeper moment of self-questioning, some hour of sudden trial or grief, some season of self-revelation, when it will earnestly ask for a Savior and Redeemer, for an assurance of faith through the cross and death of Christ, which naught else can give. We well remember listening, while yet a child, to the conversation of one in whose opinion we had been accustomed to place implicit reliance, in which he remarked, that he regarded the death of Christ as similar to that of any noble martyr in the cause of truth and righteousness, having no direct bearing upon the forgiveness of sin or the salvation of man. We then felt ourselves too young to controvert his words or question the correctness of his views ; we accepted them as the true belief of one wiser and better than ourselves, to whom we were

to look for spiritual light and guidance; but when the soul awoke to a deeper self-consciousness, to feel its need of a personal relationship to Christ as the Savior of men, we believe that, could he have known the shade cast over our faith by that hour of familiar converse, he would have been silent. He would have paused ere exciting such doubts and questionings as arose in our heart when we compared his views with what seemed to us the explicit statements of Christ and his Apostles, as we studied for ourselves the sacred record.

“Has the death of Christ nothing to do in obtaining for us the forgiveness of sins? Has not God, through the very mission and mediation of his divine Son, expressed that in his holy counsels we can obtain salvation in *no other* way?

“When, in our better moments and our most devotional frames of mind, we dwell upon such thoughts; when we consider the great redemptive work of Christ, as foretold by prophets and holy men of old, pointing on, age after age, to its glorious consummation; when we look into the human soul, and read its secret longings and

its restless cravings; when we trace there the darker windings of passion and evil, the longings for peace and pardon, and the prayer of bitter anguish for faith and reconciliation, — we feel that there is a depth of meaning in such words; that there is a sense in which Christ died as the *Savior* of man, which we may never be able wholly to express in words, — for the Divine mystery surpasses the feeble power of human language, — but which has been almost wholly ignored in many quarters among us.

"That it is *essential* to our forgiveness and salvation; that it is the price of our redemption, *opening the way* for the full bestowment of pardon and free acceptance, — expressing, as nothing else could express, God's perfect holiness and justice, his abhorrence of all sin, and, at the same time, his yearning love for the sinner, — we fully believe; and any faith less comprehensive than this we feel must ultimately prove unsatisfying to the mind."

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"Are there not moments of self-accusation; longings for peace and assurance; a consciousness that, with our best efforts, the perfect law

of Christ will never be fulfilled, — that need the objective assurance of pardon and reconciliation, given alone in the death of the Redeemer? Is there not a want in the soul that can be met only by accepting the sufferings of Christ, as in very truth a sacrifice *for us*? Does not this view lead us the soonest out of ourselves, out of a morbid self-consciousness, and impart, even in the *earlier* stages of the religious life, the trust and hope so needful to any true or rapid progress? Do not many linger at the very outset of their course, because they cannot feel that hope of pardon which the Saviour's *death* is designed to impart? Speak merely of its subjective influence, and many do not understand it, or at least remain wholly unmoved by it; yet does not all Christian history and biography assure us that there is a quickening power in the *cross* of Christ which nothing else can impart, — a power to touch the most hardened and degraded, a *peace* the world knows not of? This is one point which we hope to have answered. Does the Unitarian view of the atonement tend to meet the deepest wants of the soul and to impart inward peace?

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"When we look back upon the long array of noble witnesses to Christ, from the earliest apostles and martyrs to the present day; when we recall names fragrant with piety, whose living faith has been the very life of the Church; when we remember how trust and faith in Christ, as the soul's only assured refuge and strength, and his Cross as the only seal of acceptance, has been their support in trial and persecution, and their hope in death,—we cannot but feel that in such a faith there is infolded truths of vital reality, which need to be carefully reconsidered, and inwrought anew, in the uncertain, hesitating, cold belief of many minds."

The editor of this Unitarian monthly* also volunteers his full and hearty concession of this same point. He says:

"We know not how others may be struck with the testimonies of history; but for ourselves, as we turn back on the line of holy witnesses since the first age, as we take up biography after biography, study life after life, follow saint after saint to his victory and rest, and thus grow intimate with the great fellowship of

* 1856, p. 118, &c.

wise, strong, unyielding and mightily gifted thinkers and believers of the Church, and listen to the almost undivided voice of confession and faith coming up from the innumerable company, declaring Jesus Christ and him crucified the ground of their hopes, and his sufferings the pledge of pardon, — with only here and there a different doctrine falling in cooler accents from some exceptional tongue, — we readily own that we must reconsider whether there is not some element of blessed power here that Unitarianism has overlooked or thrown away. We are not surprised to hear from many brethren hearty utterances of the same conviction. We were not astonished, but glad, to meet, the other day, in the leading article of a periodical which, more than any other, is the organ of Unitarianism, such sentences as these :

“ ‘Indeed the suffering of this sinless One, this beloved Son of God, was the special instrument of a reconciling power. Teaching would be ineffectual without the crucifixion. The splendid series of miracles would pass over the darkened and hardened soul of the world with an ineffectual impression of wonder, confirming existing

superstitions, without the agony of a divine Sufferer to open that soul to the sense of the Father whose power was in them. The mere proclamation of forgiveness would fall powerless upon the seared conscience, and would only be an obstacle to true repentance, and lower the law of Heaven in the estimation of men, without a spotless One against whom the venom of sin might spend itself, and thus show its true character.' "

"Unless we entirely misapprehend the expressions and tendencies of Unitarian belief, there is a growing demand in that quarter for views of the work of Christ which reach beyond the old standards, which promise a profounder peace to the heart, and which, while they magnify the Cross, attach a more valid and sufficing efficacy to the whole mediatorial humiliation and spiritual sacrifice of the Son of God. After all, it is in our purest and highest devotional moods that the language of the cross becomes most natural and unquestionable to us; and that which we stumble at in cool debate we take up, with eager and delighted acceptance, in prayers and hymns."

Rev. T. Starr King, in a discourse* on the expiatory view of the atonement, speaks in most eloquent language of the spiritual experience which follows its acceptance. He says:

“Think of the emotions which this system inspires in the intense believer’s heart. What lowly humility, what unbending pride! What horror and what ecstasy! What fear of God, and what love of Jesus! What pity for the unconscious sinner, what flinty sternness towards the Redeemer’s wilful foes! The meanest souls, who, according to the expiatory system, imagine they have obtained salvation, if they only appreciate the meaning of the word, are conscious of an experience which none of us can know, and which language is too feeble to express.

“On the rich and the eloquent, the noble and the priest, they may look down with contempt; for they may esteem themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language; nobles by right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. Nothing is so well fitted to inspire a settled and stubborn stoicism toward all temporal interests

■ Liberal Christian, March 30, 1867.

and fascinations of earthly life. What distinctions can charm the senses of a spirit, confident that its name is written in the Book of Life, and seeing before it the glories of a sternly guarded Paradise? What terrors can frighten the heart that has been delivered from the fiery surges of Tartarus? What servility can bend the knees to any earthly degradation which have been raised in triumph from before the Eternal throne? What horrors can be heeded for a moment by the soul that has stood beneath the awful cross, and felt the consecrating bloody baptism from the wounded brow and the opened side of a dying God? Surely nothing in Paganism ever reached such depths of the soul as this!

“And surely no set of religious emotions, so original, so strong and pure, were ever awakened in the human soul, as those which the expiatory scheme infused into the heart of humanity; and surely no vision born from the poetic fancy or the deep religious reverence of any people, to be enshrined in the mythology of the world, can equal the Christian conception of the Infinite Redeemer in his heavenly glory for a fallen race.”

VI.

The Expiatory Scheme eulogized.

VI.

The Expiatory Scheme eulogized.

IT is currently reported that, on one occasion, Rev. T. Starr King frantically exclaimed, "Away with your blood-religion." And yet, this eminent representative of liberal sentiment was a man of a broad and generous nature, of noble moods, oftentimes exhibiting rare magnanimity towards his opponents. In his installation sermon, at the settlement of Rev. E. H. Chapin, D. D., in New York city, he uttered a glowing eulogium upon "the expiatory system." In the opening paragraphs, he set forth the leading points of this scheme (but stating them in a somewhat extreme form), and, in the course of the discourse, decidedly dissented from it, as "a separate and peculiar Christianity," "constructed from Jewish metaphors and analogies of the Epistles, and reduced into consistency and harmony by the severe labors of men like Augustine and Hop-

kins." But he was constrained to acknowledge its wonderful and beneficent power ; and, under a lofty afflatus, broke out into language of sublimest eulogy. He said :

" It is ennobled by the holiest memories ; as it has been consecrated by the loftiest talent of Christendom. It fired the fierce eloquence of Tertullian in the early Church, and gushed in honeyed periods from the lips of Chrysostom ; it enlisted the life-long zeal of Athanasius to keep it pure ; the sublimity of it fired every power, and commanded all the resources of the mighty soul of Augustine ; the learning of Jerome and the energy of Ambrose were committed to its defence ; it was the text for the subtle eye and analytic thought of Aquinas ; it was the pillar of Luther's soul toiling for man ; it was shaven into intellectual proportions and systematic symmetry by the iron logic of Calvin ; it inspired the beautiful humility of Fenelon ; fostered the devotion and self-sacrifice of Oberlin ; flowed like molten metal into the rigid forms of Edwards' intellect, and kindled the deep and steady rapture of Wesley's heart."

" And while this expiatory system of the Gos-

pel is venerable for its age and the long list of splendid minds which it has educated, and which are still the ornaments of the Church; it is equally imposing when we reflect upon the labors and schemes which it has quickened and generated for spreading the knowledge and power of the Gospel in the world. Its advocates have felt the impulse of every motive to ardent and constant zeal which the love of Christ and humanity could inspire. The philanthropy which delights to raise men from ignorance, and pour around them the light of truth and encouragement to virtue, has been trebly quickened by a feeling of the awful consequences which must follow their continued ignorance of God and the appointed means of redemption from human infirmity and sin. All the great enterprises of Christian history have been born from the influence, immediate or remote, which this vicarious theory of redemption has exercised upon the mind and heart of humanity. The man who has faith in it must be a maniac or a missionary. It has linked itself with a mighty energy to the long, deeply freighted train of human interests.

"It is to the burning zeal which the terrors connected with the expiatory view of the Gospel inspired that we owe the thousand-handed labors of the modern Church, taxing our wealth, and using with cunning arts all the appliances of mechanical invention, for the instruction of the ignorant and heathen, and the wider diffusion of the word of God. It is to this that we owe the printing of the Bible in the Cherokee and Choctaw tongues; it is this which has sent emissaries to the Hindoos and the Hottentots, in their own speech, to talk of Jesus; has built chapels to the Mediator on the shores of the Oregon and the Amazon; which hung the Cross as the sign of redemption in the Arctic and Antarctic sky; which has made the Andes and the Himalayas echo to Trinitarian prayers, and planted the banner of the Gospel on the banks of the Ganges and the Nile."

What a confession! The expiatory system controlling the mightiest minds of ancient and modern thought, generating "all the great enterprises of Christian history," and "linking itself with a mighty energy to the long and deeply freighted train of human interests"! Can it be,

then, a mere "husk of dogma," or a "figment of human speculation"? Whence its amazing vitality and power? And shall we say, "away with this blood-religion"? Certainly not, so long as it stands so vitally connected with our world's best enterprises and progress. It is evident that "the world needs it, is better off with it," however defectively stated sometimes, than with a blood-less theology, and that it is something liberalists "need to conquer to possess and not to destroy." Possessing it, how different would be the record of their foreign mission work! Instead of only one mission and only two missionaries, in the broad wastes of heathenism, they would soon be multiplied manifold.

In conclusion, therefore, we infer that the "liberal" views of the atonement, even by the concessions of liberalists themselves, "stand convicted as inadequate and unscientific by the facts, unphilosophical by the reason, jejune by the religious affections, and unhistorical by the past, while they put upon the Gospel itself the aspect of a stupendous self-misunderstanding. The profounder, richer, and more inspiring doctrine, however imperfectly set forth as yet in any

extra-Scriptural statement, lies at the heart of the New Testament, has its majestic foreshadowings in the Old, and has given its historic impulse to the life of the Church. It yields a fragrance to the ancient litanies, a tenderness to the piety it awakens, humility to the postures of the penitent soul, joy and grandeur and jubilant ascription to the worship of the great congregation."

These eloquent lines are a deeply significant concession; for they were penned by a gentleman* of highest culture, of manifold studies in "liberal" theology, and of fourteen years of editorial labors in its defence, as his maturest thought and deepest conviction. Turning away from cold negative platitudes and a devitalized sentimentalism, he joyfully adopted "the blood-theology," as it had just then been called with opprobrious intent, and "rejoiced to be numbered among those who are distinguished as 'sacrificial' believers."

In his parting salutation † he said :

"So long as the one characteristic burden of

* Rev. F. D. Huntington, D. D., on leaving the Unitarian denomination.

† Monthly Religious Magazine, 1858, vol. xx., pp. 367, 368.

preaching shall be 'Christ and him crucified ;' so long as the Bible shall remain a story and celebration of Divine and human suffering voluntarily borne for the offences and sins of others ; so long as self-abnegation is the glory of all heroism, the charm of all the fairest dreams of imagination, the grace of every ideal of humanity, and the energy that stirs our loftiest enthusiasm ; so long as it remains true, on the Savior's own word, that except a man take up his cross he cannot be his disciple, and the Cross continues the distinctive Christian sign ; so long as the immortal angels bend round the throne in homage to 'the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world ;' and so long as in the homes and habitations of the children of men meek and silent *sacrifices* of ease, comfort, pleasure, reputation, and property, and every earthly good, go on, for the dear sake of affection toward God and man, — so long will the true church of believers entreat that they may be accounted worthy to bear the designation of 'sacrificial' Christians. Yes ; that is the 'blood-theology,' — a term for which our taste is not responsible, but of which we cheerfully consent to bear our share of the reproach, in the name — would to

God it were with the temper!— of Him whose blood was verily poured out for us, — the last proof of his wondrous sympathy and infinite compassion. ‘The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,’ says the Apostle John. That is what we want of a ‘theology.’ ‘Having made peace through the blood of his cross,’ says Paul, — a work worthy of any theology. ‘For this is my blood,’ says the holy Savior, when he is appointing the great ordinance by which his Church is always to remember him, — ‘my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’ Let theology draw near, and behold, and wonder, and praise. This is the theology of boundless Love, — Love in its unutterable anguish, Love in more than the mortal pain and passion of death, — Love rising into serene and perfect and everlasting joy, through the sorrows of a life freely laid down — say, rather, offered up — for Truth, for Heaven, for God, for the salvation of the erring and guilty children of men. Blood is the element of life. Pouring it out of the heart is the most complete pledge of the sinner’s ransom, the most significant earthly emblem of self-denial. Heaven pity a blood-less theology!”

BOOK THIRD.

ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.



I.

Future Retribution conceded.

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Future Retribution conceded.

SAID an eminent writer of the "Liberal" school: "The Divine has written his nature too deep in the human heart to be extinguished by a dogma." Slightly paraphrased, we have a kindred truth: "The Divine has written" the germinal elements of certain great doctrines "too deep in the human heart to be extinguished" by sentimentalism, or by the cry of dogmatism, or the stern and perilous ordeals of re-examination and re-statement. Having their "core in precious and substantial elements of truth," however unfortunately stated sometimes, they have nevertheless become "great and widespread beliefs," "resisting all attacks," and have "been clung to and lived in" through all the ages.

In the year 1770, Lessing wrote :

"I perceive that the controversy respecting the endlessness of hell punishments is about to be agitated again by our theologians. Would that it might be so agitated as to be finally settled and considered as done with. For, undoubtedly, the saddest in these controversies is that they settle nothing, and that twenty or fifty years later any zealot or quibbler who is so disposed, imagines himself justified in taking up the matter anew."

Ninety years later,* an eminent leader of liberal thought said: "In this country the controversy is still fresh; and, judging from the publications of the past year, as far as ever from being settled."

Almost twenty years more have passed, and the same statement may be repeated. The doctrine of future endless punishment still survives, as one of the universal truths, "held not only in the minds of scholars, but by the great common

* Soon after the sermons of Rev. T. Starr King and Rev. Nehemiah Adams, D. D., on endless punishment, and the publication of Dr. Hovey's book on the State of the Impenitent Dead.

heart," "resisting all attacks;" and, while there is confessedly a weakening of belief in it, in some minds, and some modifications are apparent in its statement, nevertheless it is very evident that the constituent elements of this great truth are gaining ground, remarkable concessions are being made, and some, in the ranks of its opposers, are manifestly "conquering the doctrine to possess it and not to destroy it."

The doctrine of future retribution was wholly discarded by the major part of the earlier American Universalists. Rev. John Murray taught that, at death, the impenitent enter into a state of misery — not penal (Mr. Murray, holding the strictest "penalist theory" of the Atonement, contended that the penalty, being borne by Christ, could in no case come upon man), but the natural result of being in a state of sin and unbelief — to continue until the day of Judgment, when all will accept Christ and be saved. Rev. Hosea Ballou, the notable champion and predominant spirit among the Universalists of his time, radically changing, and for about forty years determining the theological type of the denomination, contended that sin is chiefly ■

physical evil; and that all men, at death, immediately enter upon a state of holiness and happiness. During his lifetime, the restoration wing, founded by Rev. Elhanan Winchester, was nearly eliminated from the body.

Rev. J. M. Austin, one of the fathers in the Universalist ministry, in a letter in *The Universalist*, January 26, 1878, made the following statement in regard to the prevailing views of that period. Speaking of the question of Future Retribution, he said:

"Half a century since, or more, that question came near breaking asunder the Universalist denomination. Revs. Paul Dean, Chas. Hudson, and several other believers in Future Discipline, or Future Punishment, drew off from the main body of Universalists, and endeavored to form a sect of their own, calling themselves 'Restorationists.'

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"The most of the remaining Universalists, still holding to their old name, rather took position under the leadership of Rev. Hosea Ballou, a distinguished and gifted preacher, and withal a very good man, then in the prime of life. To

some extent they imbibed his opinions of the consequences of sin, and discarded all belief in Future Discipline or Punishment. At one time, I repeat, this Ballou theory was sanctioned by quite a large portion of our denomination. Nevertheless a small party still held to the old theory that sin and its consequences reached temporarily into the future existence. This caused much discussion and some contention. But happily that crisis passed over without much, if any, injury. This question of future limited punishment, or no future punishment, has long since ceased to agitate the denomination.

“ The *Christian Ambassador* was the first Universalist journal that ever boldly and plainly advocated the doctrine of Future Discipline. When I first took that paper in charge,* the majority of, or all, the other denominational periodicals, were managed and edited by brethren holding substantially what was then, and is now, called the Ballou theory. I may be mistaken somewhat in this assertion; but I think not. The *Christian Messenger* (the predecessor of the

* In 1851.

Ambassador), while owned and published by Philo Price, or by Messrs. Halleck and Lyon, and briefly at one time being under the editorial control of Rev. Dr. Wm. S. Balch, may have alluded to or spoken approvingly of the theory of Future Discipline. But if so, it has escaped my memory, for I have no recollection of it. But this I think I can truthfully state: That the *Trumpet*, the leading Universalist journal of that era, owned and edited by Rev. Dr. Whittemore; the *Banner*, of Augusta, Me., under the ownership and editorial control of Rev. W. A. Drew; and the *Star in the West*, of Cincinnati, Ohio, of which Rev. J. A. Gurley was proprietor and editor, were outspoken advocates of Father Ballow's doctrine of no punishment subsequent to the death of the body. Indeed it was strongly advocated in those days, by leading and eminent Universalist defenders; and so deeply were the ideas imbedded in the public thought in general, that Universalism taught nothing more or less than that salvation was promised and given immediately at death, to the most wicked and depraved among the children of men, that it remains in many minds to this day."

After the death of Ballou, in 1852, the doctrine of a limited future retribution gained ground, and is now the almost unanimous sentiment of that denomination. Among the American Unitarians, Rev. Chas. Chauncy was the most prominent advocate and publisher of restoration views, now very current in that body, as well as among liberalists of every name.

Rev. Dr. W. E. Channing* opposed Mr. Ballou's theory in the following paragraph :

“It is maintained by some among us, that punishment is confined to the present life; that in changing worlds we shall change our characters; that moral evil is to be buried with the body in the grave. As this opinion spreads industriously,† and as it tends to diminish the dread of sin, it deserves some notice. To my mind a more irrational doctrine was never broached. In the first place, it contradicts all our experience of the nature and laws of the mind. There is nothing more striking in the mind than the connection of its successive states.

* Works, ed. 1872, vol. iv. p. 159.

† Referring to the spread of Hosea Ballou's views at that time.

Our present knowledge, thoughts, feelings, characters, are the results of former impressions, passions, and pursuits. We are this moment what the past has made us; and to suppose that at death the influences of our whole past course are to cease on our minds, and that a character is to spring up altogether at war with what has preceded it, is to suppose the most important law or principle of the mind to be violated, is to destroy all analogy between present and future, and to substitute for experience the wildest dreams of fancy."

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"Let us not listen for a moment to a doctrine so irrational, as that our present characters do not follow us into a future world. If we are to live again, let us settle it as a sure fact, that we shall carry with us our present minds, such as we now make them; that we shall reap good or ill according to their improvement or corruption; and, of consequence, that every act which affects character, will reach in its influence beyond the grave, and have a bearing on our future weal or woe. We are now framing our future lot."

The happiness of all, at death, impossible.

Dr. F. H. Hedge wrote in the Christian Examiner: * “No man in his senses believes that happiness hereafter will be thrust upon him in spite of himself, and against all the habits and antecedents of the soul. But to change that condition of the soul by an external force in order to make it receptive of happiness, would be to annihilate one soul and to create another in its place. If we say that this capacity already exists in the subject, — in all subjects, — we are contradicted by the plainest facts of nature and life. It may be urged that the present unfitness arises from causes which cease with death; that death will make all men blest, by removing the obstacles to blessedness which abound in this world, and which belong to this world alone. This plea supposes an efficacy in death which we have no right to assume. It is thought by some that the body and the physical and other external influences by which we are conditioned in the present life are the cause of all evil, and that every soul will be found fit for happiness when once divested from its mortal covering and

* July, 1859, pp. 103, 104.

disencumbered of its present relations. But are there no evils besides those which arise from physical and terrestrial relations? Granting that a portion of our sins and our sufferings have their origin in the flesh, there are others which cannot with any propriety be traced to that source. Some organizations, no doubt, are more favorable to moral rectitude than others, but experience shows that moral rectitude may exist under all conditions; that the most favorable, so far as we can judge, do not secure it; that the most unfavorable, so far as we can judge, do not preclude it. We have, therefore, no authority from any grounds in our present experience, and certainly not from any other source, for supposing that vice and misery belong to the body alone, and will cease with the ending of this bodily life. Moreover, in its extreme form — the supposition of immediate and universal happiness hereafter — the Universalist theory impugns the disciplinary character, and confounds the meaning and aggravates the mystery of this human world. If all men are morally fit for happiness now, it is difficult to understand why this world has not been so arranged as to yield that happiness now,

and why we are doomed to reach by the long and circuitous route of mortal experience and through the miracle of death, a good to which in our present capacity we might seem to have a present claim.”

Fifteen years later, the language of Dr. Hedge * was not less emphatic. Speaking of those who suppose that human beings “are translated by death from a state of earthly imperfection to one of transcendent blessedness” — the doctrine of Rev. Hosea Ballou, — he said :

“A groundless and preposterous idea, as it seems to me, of human destiny. The purgatory of the Church of Rome is a less irrational conception of the future of the soul. The purgatory of the Church of Rome, indefensible as it is in the gross, material form in which it has been held in time past, respects at least the moral conditions which, in every state, must shape the life of rational souls. I hold to the analogies of the present life. I hold to what we know or may rationally surmise of the nature of the soul. Above all, I hold to the moral conditions which must govern the future

* Unitarian Review, Sept., 1874, p. 105.

■ they govern the past of moral natures. Whatever of moral growth has been attained will tell on the future consciousness; and whatever of moral evil will also tell."

In the months of November, December, and January, 1877 and '78, the Monday Meetings of the Universalist Ministers, in Boston, discussed the question, "What is the Universalist doctrine of future discipline?" On the 12th of November, Rev. Dr. G. T. Flanders, of Lowell, made the principal address, "discussing it from the side of what is known as the Disciplinary or Future Punishment School," though using the term "discipline," or "retribution," instead of punishment. He submitted some facts and statements in the following form:

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"3. Intellectual and spiritual manifestations pertain only to man as a spirit, therefore whatever is gained or achieved by man in this world is the sole property of the spirit, and, of necessity, accompanies a man after death.

"4. Therefore, character is not dependent upon the body for its existence, nor does a man

lose his character by dying ; therefore, character goes with a man after death.

“5. Character is purely a moral, and not a physical formation.

“6. Conditions of happiness or misery always attend upon character ; therefore, conditions of happiness or misery attend a man after death.

“7. Man being man after death, and therefore possessed of the same freedom of the will as here, the same sense of moral responsibility as here, will therefore be subject to discipline there as he is here.

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“10. Evil inheres in the affections and in the will, and can only be eradicated by discipline.

“11. Discipline founded upon eternal and immutable justice, there as here, will therefore be graduated to meet each individual case on its merits.”

“On the 18th, Dr. A. A. Miner, by appointment, made the principal address. He adverted briefly to the difference of meaning between the use of such terms as ‘discipline’ and ‘punishment’ by ‘the fathers’ of our Church and by the theologians of other sects. Of future punishment in

the sense meant by the Orthodox teachers of ■ former day, no Universalist, of a former or of the present day, would pretend to be an advocate."

He agreed that "character is not a fleshly article, nor does man lose his character by dying." "Dr. Miner affirmed his belief in retribution lasting as long as men remain wicked." *

November 26th, Rev. J. M. Atwood made the principal address, submitting the following propositions: †

"1. There is not any authoritative doctrine of the Universalist Church on the subject of Future Punishment. But,

"2. The prevalent view of both clergy and people, the speaker thought, is this: That the relation of man's life after death to his life before is very intimate; that death, while it may introduce him to improved circumstances, does not effect any moral change; that therefore a man wicked and guilty immediately before death will be the same immediately after; that the moral nature of man, and the moral administra-

* See Account of the meeting, published in *The Universalist*, November 24, 1877.

† See *The Universalist*, December 1, 1877.

tion of God, are the same in both worlds; and that the only way for this wicked and guilty man to become cleansed and reconciled, is the way prescribed for such men here—conviction of sin, repentance, and reformation; that is, a new course in conformity with righteousness, which is to be persisted in until a righteous character has been established.

“3. The speaker considered ‘discipline’ to be the whole range of vicissitude through which God conducts the sinner up into goodness and perfection. It includes punishment, but embraces also the stimulants of hope and love.

“4. How many human beings need such discipline? The great mass of those who have died would have required it if they had remained here. Since they continue to be the same beings, under the same moral administration, they must require it there. Otherwise it cannot be expected that they will ever be saved.

“5. It is objected to this view that it does not take account of the helps that may intervene on the passage. But it does take account of all the helps of which we have any knowledge. If there are any of which we do not know, we can-

not be censured for failing to take account of them. But the decisive fact is, that whatever the helps, man remaining man, he must get out of sin into righteousness by essentially the same process.

"6. It is also objected that this view depends on analogy, which is untrustworthy in the case. But this objection confuses the fact of a future life with the conditions and employments of that life. Analogy cannot tell us whether we live after the dissolution of the body. For that we depend on revelation, intuition, and inference. But it is the proper field of analogical reasoning to make known to us what will be our probable condition and occupation there. So far as to our identity, however, and the logical conclusions from that fact, we do not depend on analogy; and this is a very important part of the doctrine.

"The speaker insisted that it is the duty of our ministers to meet the question frankly, and let the world know what they think will take place in the case of the vast multitude of mankind who leave this world in a state, not only of moral degradation, but of moral turpitude and guiltiness.

“Remarks followed by Rev. Dr. Miner, who thought there was no essential discrepancy between the speaker’s views and his own.”

The editor of the *Universalist** made the following statement of his views:

“We are accustomed to differ with some of our brethren in regard to ‘future discipline’ in this particular: Though we do not, by any means, deem the Scriptures silent on the subject, we still hold that the question is substantially a philosophical one. Those who deny and those who affirm the continuance of punishment beyond the grave, both base their belief on reasons that would come under the head of philosophy. A reason against future punishment often takes this form: ‘Sin depends for its incitement and cause on the temptations of the flesh, and may therefore be presumed to depart with the flesh.’ Whether a valid or an invalid reason, it is a philosophical and not a Scriptural one. A reason for future punishment often runs thus: ‘Character can admit of no sudden change, and it is not determined by the bodily condition. It is therefore only by miracle that the bad at death

* *Universalist*, December 1, 1877.

can be made good immediately after death.' This may be a good or a poor argument; but it is of the nature of philosophy. Then it is by philosophical reasoning we come to the conclusion that in the Divine Government there is no such thing as penal infliction, arbitrary or mechanical award for either merit or demerit. The result is always a fruitage — a development by inhering law. We do believe this to be Gospel truth; but our reasons for so believing are chiefly philosophical. The Scriptures seldom reveal things which reason is competent to discover."

Rev. H. A. Haweis * said :

"The rising of God's wrath against sin is an eternal property or quality of God. His judgment or punishment rests eternally upon what is evil, and upon man, so long as he is given up to evil, in this world and in the next. It is futile to talk of God's letting a man off. He could not, without violating his own moral constitution.

* A representative of the "Liberal" clergy of England. See "Thoughts for the Times," (New York, Holt & Williams,) 1872, pp. 339, 340, &c.

“God cannot change; therefore, so long as you are in opposition to him, you will be tormented by the fire that is not quenched, by the worm that dies not. You do not feel conscious of all this now, you say. Perhaps not; but you will all of you feel, sooner or later, the degradation and the misery of sin. That is a question of time. Sooner or later, you will feel misery and own to torment, although you go on now gaily; but the longer you go on gaily, the more surely will come the time when the almighty wrath of God will be felt by you, in your soul and in your body. God will not let off a man one jot or one tittle; if you sin, you will have to pay the penalty, in the degradation and misery of your soul and body, and that will go on forever, if you go on rebelling against God forever and ever.”

Rev. Wm. G. Eliot, D. D.,* of St. Louis, said:

“As the result of experience and observation, we arrive at these conclusions. First, that the great law of our lives is the law of retribution. The present is answering for the past, the future

* “Doctrines of Christianity,” published by the American Unitarian Association, 1873, p. 154.

must answer for the present. God's laws cannot be violated with impunity. That which we sow we also reap. This, in its various developments, is the primal, essential law of our being. Secondly, considered as a moral retribution, the action of this law is, in this world, imperfect and unequal.

"Both of these conclusions lead us to a third, namely, that the same general law of retribution, which seems to be the condition of life itself, shall continue in the soul as long as the soul lives. There is nothing to indicate that it belongs to this world only. Let the fact of a future life be admitted, and it seems to follow, as a matter of necessity, that this law shall continue. If so, it will become, as a moral retribution, just and equal. The disturbing influences will cease."

Speaking of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, he said: *

"A broad distinction is made between the good and bad, the penitent and impenitent, whenever a future life is mentioned, and it is taken for granted that it will continue there. I attach more importance to this form of argu-

ment than I do to the literal interpretation of words, and think that it is much less likely to mislead us. The plainest language may be explained away, and we may be deceived as to its meaning. But this argument does not depend on verbal criticism. When the doctrine of a future life is used as a motive for faithfulness and obedience, it is an evident declaration that that unknown world is not the same to the good and bad, but that the future must answer for the present.

“There are, however, many direct assertions of the same truth. The ingenuity of criticism may throw a doubt over some of them, but they are so many, and their obvious interpretation seems so evidently their true meaning, that, although I would not impute intentional unfairness to those who explain them away, I cannot help feeling surprised at the boldness of their undertaking. ‘Except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ ‘If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.’ ‘Not every one that saith unto me,

Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' 'For we must all appear,' said the Apostle Paul, 'before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' 'Know this, that no unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.' Again, after enumerating the works of the flesh, he says, 'Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' For 'God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace, to

every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God.' 'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' "

He then adds: "I do not see how this language can be fairly explained, except as teaching the doctrine of future retribution for sin. So far as I can understand their words, this is what the Savior and his Apostles meant to teach, and therefore I believe it."

Rev. E. S. Gannett, D.D., said : *

"There is one other doctrine of our religion, which I may not leave unnoticed,—the doctrine of retribution; which unfolds the influence of each moment on the next moment, of each period of our mortal existence on the subsequent periods, and of the whole of life on an endless futurity. If there be anything positive in the Gospel, it is the declaration that man is living under a judgment, which never relaxes its vigilance, nor suspends its retributive function; a judgment for the rectitude and constancy of which the Divine attributes are a security, and

* Life of Dr. Gannett, p. 481.

the nature of which Christ has set forth, now in the unequivocal terms in which its principles are announced, and now by the terrific images in which its effects are described."

Again, in an article on Unitarian belief, in 1871, Dr. Gannett said: *

"We believe that change (regeneration) must take place with the sinner, or he must suffer the penalty of his transgression, and go down to ruin. And therefore we believe in retribution. We believe that every sin has its penalty bound to it by the eternal decree of Omnipotence and by the eternal law of love. We believe that sin must be punished, because God loves the sinner, — not his sin, but the sinner; and therefore, as he loved the world, when it was 'dead in trespasses and sins,' and sent his dear Son to die for it, so God loves the sinner in his impenitence and unbelief, and will put him to trouble, to suffering, to anguish, here or hereafter, until the sinner shall have been compelled to pour out his soul in penitent confession, and accept mercy. And if the sinner will not do it, then God's punishment must follow him."

* Life of Dr. Gannett, pp. 531, 532.

Rev. Orville Dewey, D. D., in a discourse on Retribution, said : *

“Beware what thou layest up for the future ; beware what thou layest up in the archives of eternity ! Thou who wouldst wrong thy neighbor, beware ! lest the thought of that injured man, wounded and suffering from thine injury, be a pang which long years may not deprive of its bitterness. Thou who wouldst break into the house of innocence and rifle it of its treasure, beware ! lest, when many years have passed over thee, the moan of its distress may not have died away from thine ear. Thou who wouldst build the desolate throne of ambition in thy heart, beware what thou art doing with all thy devices, and circumventings, and selfish schemings, lest desolation and loneliness be on thy path as it stretches into the long futurity. Thou, in fine, who art living a negligent and irreligious life, beware ! beware how thou livest ; for bound up with that life are elements of God’s creating, which shall never spend their force ; which shall be unfolding and unfolding with the ages of eternity. Beware ! I say once more, and be not

* Dewey’s Works, vol. ii. pp. 68, 69.

deceived. *Be not deceived.* God is not mocked ; God who has framed thy nature thus to answer to the future, is not mocked ; his law can never be abrogated ; his justice can never be eluded ; beware, then, be forewarned ; since, forever and forever, it will be true, that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The Gehenna of the New Testament the place of future retribution, conceded.

Rev. William G. Eliot, D. D., of St. Louis, in a discourse on retribution, said : *

"It is a Hebrew word, properly signifying the valley of Hinnom, a beautiful valley near Jerusalem, by the brook Kidron, where Solomon, at the time of his apostasy from God, set up a brazen image of Moloch, before which the idolatrous Jews offered, not only the usual sacrifices, but even their own children. (1 Kings, xi. 7 ; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3.) This valley was called by the prophet Jeremiah, Tophet, (Jer. vii. 31, 32,) from a word signifying tympanum, because in those sacrifices the priests beat violently the tympana, lest

* "Doctrines of Christianity," American Unitarian Association, 1873, pp. 160, 161.

the shrieks of the burning children should be heard by the worshippers. When these horrible rites were abolished by Josias, (2 Kings, xxiii. 10,) and the Jews were reclaimed to the worship of God, they detested this valley, the scene of their guilt, so much, that they made it the receptacle, not only of all the filth of the city, but of dead animals, and of the bodies of executed criminals; and to prevent the pollution of the air from this mass of decayed matter, fires were kept incessantly burning, night and day, from the beginning to the end of the year. Hence the valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, soon passed into a proverb or common expression for any severe punishment, and especially for any disgraceful kind of death, and ultimately was applied to the miserable condition of those who, in the future life, suffer the agonies of guilt; so that, in the time of Christ, one of the common meanings of Gehenna was what we understand by the word Hell.*

“This, however, was not its only use, and

* “The word Gehenna is used in this way (viz., for the place of punishment beyond the grave) very frequently in Oriental writers, as far as India. Compare Wetstein’s New Testament, at Matt. v. 22.” — *Jahn’s Archæology*, § 411.

therefore, in reading the New Testament, we must be guided by the context to determine the meaning in each case. But in several of the passages it undoubtedly refers to the doom of the wicked; as in the text already quoted, 'Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,' (Matthew x. 28,) any other construction of which seems to me very forced and unnatural

"This word Gehenna — derived, as I have shown it to be, but transferred from its original meaning and applied to express figuratively the condition of the wicked — contains in itself the germ and explanation of all the various terms which the Scriptures use to describe future punishment. To call the abode of the condemned Gehenna, to a Jewish ear included the fire which is never quenched, and the undying worm, and the lake of fire burning with brimstone. These particulars were only the completion of the first idea. To us they seem to add a great deal to the simple term Gehenna, but to a Jew that word embraced within itself all that is horrible and loathsome, all that is disgraceful and revolting, all that is agonizing, in ignominious punishment and death. To the application of this

term to the place of punishment, we may therefore with certainty attribute those figurative expressions, in which it is spoken of as a place of darkness and fierce burning and torture. All these expressions are figures derived from that awful valley, whose name was borrowed to describe the state of being we call Hell."

In the Monthly Religious Magazine for May, 1873,* Rev. E. H. Sears, D. D., gave substantially the same view of *gehenna*, and cited in its support the testimonies of Robinson, Campbell, Clarke, Calmet, Jahn, and Josephus.

In further support of this view, it may be added, that three eminent scholars of the liberal school of theology,—Professors George R. Noyes, D. D., and Nathaniel S. Folsom, and Mr. Leicester Ambrose Sawyer,—in their published translations of the New Testament, have uniformly rendered *γέεννα*, by the English word *hell*. Mr. Folsom rendered Matthew v. 22, "*the fiery hell*;" and, in a note,† said, "*The Gehenna of fire*. Gehenna among the Jews, like the Tartarus of the Greeks, was equivalent to the word hell."

As to the word *hades*, Mr. Sawyer has left it

* Pages 489-491.

† Page 362.

untranslated; but Messrs. Noyes and Folsom have rendered it by the term *under-world*. Mr. Folsom translated Matthew xvi. 18, "*the gates of the under-world*;" and, in a note,* adds, "lit. of *Hades*, the unseen (realm), for which the Germans have adopted *under-world* as the equivalent word." Mr. Folsom also translated Luke viii. 31, "*The Abyss*;" and, in a note,† added, "the *Ge-henna*, or *Tartarus* in *Hades*, according to the belief of the times." This term, which is used nine times in the New Testament, and, in the Apocalypse, is rendered "bottomless pit," is translated *abyss* by Messrs. Noyes and Sawyer.

Such are some of the concessions of modern liberalists in favor of the doctrine of a place of retribution in the future world.

* Page 370.

† Page 396.

II.

The fearfulness of future Retribution
conceded.

II.

The Fearfulness of Future Retribution conceded.

THE terrible portrayals of the future misery of the wicked, by Edwards and others, nearly a hundred and fifty years ago, have been freely quoted, for the purpose of bringing evangelical theology into disrepute; and yet the evangelical churches are charged with having materially modified their views, because they do not now generally preach the doctrine of literal fire and brimstone, as the future portion of the impenitent. Such persons forget that the early restorationists are liable to the same charge of terrific portrayals, and that similar modifications have taken place in their own denominations. The volumes published, less than one hundred years ago, by Rev. Dr. Charles Chauncy and Rev. Elhanan Winchester, the founders of the doctrine of Restorationism in the Unitarian and Universalist denominations in America, present

the future condition of the wicked in an appalling light. Both of these writers agree in representing that the impenitent will be tormented, in literal fire and brimstone, for very long periods of time, — Winchester making the duration forty-nine thousand years, and Dr. Chauncy "for ages of ages." Rev. Dr. A. A. Miner, in his Centennial discourse,* spoke eulogistically of Mr. Winchester's "eminent abilities and popular address, rivalling, perhaps, in public favor, the distinguished Murray himself."

Rev. Elhanan Winchester † said:

"2. They shall be actually cast into a state of positive suffering, and most tormenting agony and pain.

"3. The fire into which they shall be cast shall not have power to annihilate them, or to destroy their sensibility, as is evident by their weeping, wailing, and gnashing their teeth; which words express a painful and most miserable state of existence."

Again he said: ‡ "The workers of iniquity

* "The Universalist Centennial Volume," p. 35.

† Prophecies, 1800, vol. ii. p. 86.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 131, 132.

shall, in addition to all their other sufferings, endure the real pain of fire and brimstone, which is the severest torment that we are able to imagine or conceive; and if the miseries of the burning lake are no more terrible than to feel continually the intense pain that fire is able to give to living bodies (and they certainly can be no less), they must be dreadful enough, one would think, to deter mankind from sin.

“Methinks I behold the awful scene—the close of the Judgment day! The dreadful sentence is pronounced—‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.’ ‘You would not hearken unto me, and now you must reap the fruit of your own folly; you chose the service of Satan, and now you must share with him in his punishment: and as you have labored with him to commit sin, you must receive the wages thereof, even the second death.’

“Then shall the Judge ascend, with all his train, and leave them to their fate. That moment shall the world begin to blaze, the rocks and mountains shall melt, the sea retire, and the dreadful storm begin, from which there can be no hiding!

"In vain do I attempt to describe it. I am certain I cannot represent it sufficiently dreadful, though some will doubtless think that I exceed the truth. But, in this case, it is not possible to equal it. What must be their terror and confusion, and what the keen anguish which they must endure, in soul and body, when the earth dissolves, and the atmosphere perishes around them by fire and fervent heat, and they burn in the livid flame, without being able to expire, or even obtain the least ease or mitigation of their pain!"

Page 135: "I have no doubt but that the fire and brimstone are real, and that the wicked shall suffer equal torments in their bodies as in their minds."

Page 138: "It is very plain that this most awful passage ('And they have no rest day nor night,' &c.) contains threatenings of the greatest positive pain, both of mind and body, expressed by drinking of the 'wine of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation,' and being tormented with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment ascending up for ages and ages, without

intermission ; having no intervals of rest or ease, day or night. O, shocking thought ! Who can endure such complicated woe ? Or bear such a vast variety of pain ? Pain in spirit — a sense of the wrath of God — a guilty conscience, &c., — pain in body — tormented with fire and brimstone : — no rest ! no ease ! no intermission ! ”

As to Mr. Winchester’s views of the length of the punishment of the wicked, it may be said that he indulged in some fanciful speculations, based upon the fiftieth year — the year of Jubilee — under the Mosaic dispensation, in which was a great day of atonement and universal release for all in debt or in bondage. “ The seven periods or Sabbaths of years,” or forty nine years, he said, “ appear to me to correspond to the *ages of ages*, so frequently mentioned or alluded to in the New Testament.” He therefore said he was “ inclined to believe ” that “ the whole period of the mediatorial dispensation toward mankind will be forty-nine thousand years,” “ and so the Restoration may be carried on during the seven periods, and be completed before their close.” . . . “ It is highly probable to me, that the shortest period of the sufferings of those

who shall be cast into the lake of fire after the Judgment, may be six thousand years, and that some may endure that dreadful pain for seven times six thousand years. The ages of ages, during which the smoke of the torment of the wicked shall ascend, will be long and painful periods." (Pages 137, 498, &c.)

Such were the terrific representations of the future misery of the wicked, by the founder of Restorationism among the Universalists. Did Edwards ever write anything more terrible? More recent representations are also of a most alarming character.

Dr. W. E. Channing* said: "It is plainly implied in Scripture, that we shall suffer much more from sin, evil tempers, irreligion, in the future world than we suffer here. This is one main distinction between the two states. In the present world, sin does indeed bring with it many pains, but not full or exact retribution. . . . After death, character will produce its full effect. . . . The circumstances which in this life prevent vice, sin, wrong-doing, from inflict-

* Edition of Works, by American Unitarian Association 1872, vol. iv. pp. 162-165.

ing pain, will not operate hereafter. There the evil mind will be exposed to its own terrible agency, and nothing, nothing will interfere between the transgressor and his own awakened conscience. In the present life, we have the means of escaping, amusing, and forgetting ourselves. Sleep is a function of our present animal frame, but let not the transgressor anticipate this boon in the world of retribution before him. It may be, and he has reason to fear, that, in that state, repose will not weigh down his eyelids, that conscience will not slumber there, that day and night the same reproaching voice is to cry within, that unrepented sin is to fasten its unrelaxing grasp on the ever-wakeful soul. It seems to me probable, that, in the future, the whole creation will, through sin, be turned into a source of suffering, and will perpetually throw back the evil mind on its own transgressions. One and only one evil can be carried from this world to the next, and that is the evil within us, moral evil, guilt, crime, ungoverned passion. The depraved mind, the memory of a wasted or ill-spent life, the character which has grown up under neglect of God's

voice in his word and in the soul: this, this will go with us to stamp itself on our future frames, to darken our future being, to separate us like an impassable gulf from our Creator and from pure and happy beings, to be as a consuming fire and an undying worm."

Such were the words of the celebrated Dr. Channing.

Rev. Orville Dewey, D. D., spoke [■] with great emphasis on this subject:

"The great evil attending the common statements of this doctrine, I shall now venture to say, is not, that they are too alarming. Men are not enough alarmed at the dangers of a sinful course. No men are; no men, though they sit under the most terrifying dispensation of preaching that ever was devised. But the evil is, that the alarm is addressed too much to the imagination, and too little to the reason and conscience. Neither Whitefield, nor Baxter, nor Edwards, — though the horror produced by his celebrated sermon 'on the justice of God in the damnation of sinners,' is a matter of tradition in New England to this very day, — yet no one of

■ Works, vol. ii. pp. 70, 71.

them ever preached too much terror, though they may have preached it too exclusively; but the evil was that they preached terror, I repeat, too much to the imagination, and too little to the reason and conscience. Of mere fright there may be too much; but of real, rational fear there never can be too much. Sin, vice, a corrupt mind, a guilty life, and the woes naturally flowing from these, can never be too much dreaded."

The leading editor of the *Monthly Religious Magazine* * said:

"All the scenery of the spirit-world described in the Bible is to be understood in the light of a more rational pneumatology. Because it is not material scenery, it none the less sets forth the most august realities, the things contained in human nature, and waiting to be disclosed. The future of man he bears within himself, — those white enrobing purities, or the fires and ascending smoke of torment. Any man who thinks sin belongs only to the surface of human nature — is only a wrinkle of the outer rind — slides quickly into the baldest Universalism, and will see very little or no evil in prospect when this outward

* July, 1861, p. 5.

coil has been removed. Any man in whose consciousness moral evil has been awfully vivid, and its subtle and malignant nature understood, will believe that the lowest hells which the Scriptures describe can be no mere figures of speech, but the real apocalypse of an uncleansed human nature. He knows that since this tide of humanity is setting into the spiritual world continually, with only portions of it redeemed from evil, there must be in that world not only the heights of peace, but the noxious abysses which no plummet can fathom, and he will not try to hide the reality in shallow sentimentalism. For what is here concealed under temporal disguises must there be open and palpable where the disguises are swept away."

Rev. E. S. Gannett, D. D.,* preached very powerfully and alarmingly upon the loss of the soul :

"And if you are not saved, O ! consider you must be lost ! Ask ye the meaning of that word ? Who can tell its fearful import ? Self-reproach, exclusion from the happiness of heaven, removal from the favor of God ; to live but to suffer ; to

■ Life of Dr. Gannett, p. 85.

be surrounded by proofs of the Divine Majesty, only to be tormented by the sight; to be conscious of power, affections, and wants, craving and pining and raving for satisfaction; and to feel one's self at variance with all that is true and good and beautiful in the universe — this it is, in part, to be lost through one's own folly. What more it is eternity will disclose."

Rev. Dr. W. G. Eliot, of St. Louis,* said:

"I would not lessen the fear which sin brings to the guilty man. It cannot be too great, so long as it is calm and rational, arising from our knowledge of the ruin which sin brings upon the soul now, and the dread of what it may do hereafter. The terms used in the Scripture, though strongly figurative, are not unmeaning words. We may divest ourselves of the horror which their literal interpretation would convey, but we cannot set them aside. The Savior, in adopting as the expression for the punishment of the wicked a word so full of terror as the valley of Hinnom, took the surest way of declaring that the sorrow

* "Discourses on the Doctrines of Christianity." American Unitarian Association, 1873, pp. 162, 163.

of the sinful soul hereafter is beyond the power of tame words to describe.

"Figurative language is used to convey greater strength and intensity of meaning. Are we yet so ignorant as not to know, so brutish as not to understand, that there is no torture of these frail sinews, no agony which can be brought on this crumbling body, so dreadful as the rising of an abused conscience to assert its stern dominion over the guilty soul? If we wished to picture to ourselves the real climax of suffering, it would be to place the soul, not in outward fire, but in the midst of beauty and external delight, with this curse upon it, that neither day nor night should the serpent's teeth of remorse cease to gnaw and devour. That curse would convert all things into instruments of torture, and outward flames would not be wanting to increase the woe."

Such are some of the vivid portrayals of the sufferings of the wicked, in a state of retribution, by eminent representatives of modern liberal sentiment.

III.

The Theological Hypothesis of Universal
Restoration, not taught in the Bible,
conceded.

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The Theological Hypothesis of Universal Restoration, not taught in the Bible, conceded.

WILL the fearful sufferings of the wicked have an end? What say the Scriptures? Do they afford any clear light on this momentous inquiry? In the search for a satisfactory answer, the sacred volume has been anxiously opened, ransacked, and tortured; methods of interpretation old and new, fair and false, legitimate and illegitimate, have been resorted to; its teachings have been considered in the light of sentiment and in the light of philosophy, in the light of human nature and in the light of human conceptions of the Divine; and the supposed modifying influence of Jewish metaphors, pagan philosophy, medieval superstitions, and the stern logic of the schoolmen, have all been deeply pondered again and again. But the dark

and gloomy fate of the impenitent wicked is too indelibly written in the sacred Word to be erased, and too distinctly enunciated to be misunderstood, by truly candid, cultured, and sincere seekers after truth. Many of these inquirers — Liberalists of the highest character, standing, and intelligence, rising above the trammels of sect and association — have been constrained to acknowledge, that by no just interpretation can the doctrine of the final restoration of all men be deduced from the word of God. Passages will be freely cited containing concessions remarkable and clear. It will be noticed that all the writers whose testimony is quoted cherish the doctrine of ultimate universal restoration, as a hope, a speculation, deduced by philosophical arguments from the benevolence of God; but they nevertheless agree in this very important conclusion, which is one of the great fundamentals of Orthodoxy — that the doctrine of Restorationism is not taught in the Holy Scriptures.

We have, first, concessions from those *standing professedly outside of Revelation*.

Renan understood Jesus as teaching the doc-

trine of endless punishment. Speaking of his inculcations, he said : *

“ The others (the wicked) will go into *Gehenna*. *Gehenna* was the valley west of Jerusalem. At various periods the worship of fire had been practised in it, and the place had been a sort of *cloaca* (receptacle of filth). *Gehenna* is, therefore, in the mind of Jesus, a dismal valley, foul and full of sin. Those excluded from the kingdom will be burned, and gnawed by worms, in company with Satan and his rebel angels. There, then, shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The kingdom of God will be like a closed wall, lighted up within, in the midst of this world of darkness and of torments. This new order of things will be eternal. Paradise and *Gehenna* shall have no end. . . . That all this was understood literally by the disciples, and the Master himself, at certain moments, stands forth absolutely evidenced in the writings of the time.”

Messrs. Thomas Paine,† Hittell,‡ and other

* Life of Jesus, p. 243.

† Age of Reason, edition 1796, Part I. p. 18.

‡ Evidences against Christianity, I. pp. 121, 127.

sceptics, have made similar admissions in regard to the teachings of Jesus, and have based their rejection of the New Testament on this ground.

Mr. Theodore Parker, in a letter to Rev. Nehemiah Adams, D. D., in 1858, made the following acknowledgment :

"To me it is quite clear that Jesus Christ taught the doctrine of eternal damnation, if the evangelists — the first three I mean — are to be treated as inspired. I can understand his language in no other way. But as the Protestant sects start with the notion, which to me is a monstrous one, that the words of the New Testament are all miraculously inspired of God, and so infallibly true ; and as the doctrine of eternal damnation is so revolting to all the humane and moral feelings of our nature, men said the Word must be interpreted in another way.

"So, as the Unitarians have misinterpreted the New Testament to prove that the Christos of the Fourth Gospel had no pre-existence, the Universalists have misinterpreted passages of the Gospels to show that Jesus of Nazareth never taught eternal damnation."

In his discourses on "Matters of Religion,"* he

* Pages 239, 243.

said : "It is vain to deny or attempt to conceal the errors of his (Jesus) doctrine — a revengeful God, a Devil absolutely evil, an eternal Hell," &c. "He (Jesus) considers God so imperfect as to damn the majority of men to eternal torment." "Hell is eternal, and the wide road thereto is travelled well."

In his last discourse, Mr. Parker said :

"I think there is not in the Old Testament or the New, a single word which tells this blessed truth, that penitence hereafter will do any good."

Said Rev. Asahel Moore, a minister of the Universalist denomination in Maine :

"All sceptics, so far as we have been able to ascertain their views, suppose the Bible to teach the doctrine of endless misery ; and on this ground they reject it."

Similar concessions have been made *by professed believers in Divine Revelation*, but who stand opposed to Orthodoxy.

In the report of the Executive Committee *

* Page 28. The names of the committee were Hon. Albert Fearing, Rev. George W. Briggs, Rev. Wm. R. Alger, Rev. Calvin Lincoln, and George Callender, Esq. The report was adopted by the Association.

of the American Unitarian Association, for 1853, we find the following language :

"It is our firm conviction that the final restoration of all is not revealed in the Scriptures, but that the ultimate fate of the impenitent wicked is enshrouded in impenetrable obscurity, so far as the total declarations of the sacred writings are concerned ; and while we do generally hold to the doctrine of the final universality of salvation, as a consistent speculation of the reason and a strong belief of the heart, yet we deem it to be in each case a matter of contingency, always depending on conditions freely to be accepted or rejected. Those of us who believe (as a large majority of us do) in the final recovery of all souls, therefore, cannot emphasize it, in the foreground of their preaching, as a sure part of Christianity, but only elevate it in the background of their system, as a glorious hope," &c.

Rev. T. Starr King, while contending that the doctrine of endless punishment is opposed to "our constitutional instincts," and "to the *principles* of the religion of Jesus," especially "the

conception he has given us of God," nevertheless made the following important concession: *

"Yet I freely say that I do not find the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all souls clearly stated in any text, or in any discourse, that has been reported from the lips of Christ. I do not think we can fairly maintain that the final restoration of all men is a prominent and explicit doctrine of the four Gospels. We needlessly narrow the grounds of opposition to Sacrificial Orthodoxy, by attacking it from such a position. There is no argument for the final triumph of goodness recorded in the four Gospels, nor any dogmatic textual assertion of that doctrine."

One of the editors of the Monthly Religious Magazine, for July, 1861, wrote:

"It will hardly be asserted by competent scholars that the doctrine of universal salvation" (meaning universal restorationism) "is fairly made out as the teaching of sacred Scripture. Much of the Universalist exegesis must be, and is, abandoned as fantastic and absurd. The scholar must argue the doctrine, if at all, from the attributes of God, not from any word which

■ Sermons on Endless Punishment, 1858, pp. 5, 6.

God has spoken. This is conceded now by the most intelligent believers in Universalism. They argue it, not from textual, but from general and philosophical grounds."

The same editor,* nine years later, said :

"Unitarians do not believe it (Universal Restoration) as a doctrine of Revelation fairly yielded by the interpretation of the Scriptures. This we mean is the average opinion. They do not think the Bible gives any verdict as to the final salvation of all mankind. It reveals clearly the issues of this life in the life proximate beyond the grave; but what lies beyond *that*, in the abyss of eternity, touching the incorrigibly wicked, they do not think has been a matter of disclosure in any written revelation." But he says that Unitarians nevertheless hold the hypothesis of universal restoration, not as a dogma of revelation, but as "a deduction of the private reason," &c.

Concessions in regard to the meaning of the word αἰώνιος.

In a criticism upon the theory of Professor

* Monthly Religious Magazine, Feb. 1870, p. 205.

Maurice and others, that the word *αἰώνιος* is unrelated to time, and has a meaning nearly equivalent to the word *spiritual*, describing a *state*, and not the *duration* of a state, Professor George R. Noyes,* D.D., of the Cambridge Divinity School, said :

“We are obliged to differ from him very widely in regard to his Scriptural argument, or rather his view of the meaning of the Greek term *αἰώνιος* and the English word *eternal*. The opinion expressed by him, that the idea of duration is to be excluded from either of these terms, strikes us as an enormous paradox, wholly in opposition to the usage of words, *usus loquendi*, both in the Greek and the English language.

“We are absolutely astonished that a scholar, so distinguished in the universities of England as to become a professor, should advance so singular an opinion. It is more especially strange, as Professor Maurice, in common with the Tractarian party, professes great deference to authority, particularly to the authority of the Church of England. But was no deference due to the authority of the universal church of

* Christian Examiner, March, 1854, pp. 282, 283, &c.

scholars, lexicographers, and commentators, in regard to the meaning of a Greek term of very common occurrence in the Scriptures? Professor Maurice, in excluding the idea of duration from the term *αἰώνιος*, and making it express some quality which may be experienced in this world, has set himself in contradiction to all the classical Greek dictionaries, such as those of Stephens, Scapula, Hedericus, Schneider, Passow, Liddell and Scott, and to all the lexicons of the Old and New Testaments, such as those of Schleusner, Wahl, Bretschneider, and Robinson. He has also contradicted every Biblical commentator from the time of the Church Fathers to the present day, in all countries of Christendom. Now, if the chief justice of the highest court in England should found the decision of a cause on the meaning of a word contrary to that which had been assigned to it by all lawyers and all judges, in all courts of law, in all countries of the world, and in all ages from the time of Justinian, we suppose that little respect would be paid to his decision, whatever claim he might lay to legal discernment, and however much contempt he might express for the 'formal' under-

standings of those who differed from him. Why should we judge differently, when a new meaning is put upon a Scriptural term, or rather a common term, in the Greek language?

“But we are aware that, in a case of criticism, authority is to be resorted to with great caution. There is the less need of it in this case, since the term *αιώνιος* is of very common occurrence in the New Testament, and in the Septuagint version of the Old. It occurs more than a hundred times in the latter, and more than seventy times in the former, so that there is ample opportunity for applying the most important considerations which the art of interpretation suggests for discovering the meaning of a word, such as the usage of language, the connection of the discourse, the different subjects to which it is applied, and parallel expressions and passages. We are sure that no scholar can spend half an hour in applying these considerations to the subject under consideration, with the help of Trommius’s Concordance on the Old, and Schmidt’s or Bruder’s on the New Testament, without being convinced that the opinion which excludes

the idea of duration from the term *αἰώνιος* is altogether baseless."

After two pages of citations from the Scriptures, Professor Noyes resumes :

"From these examples of the use of the term *αἰώνιος* in the Old Testament and in the New, it would seem to be very evident that, though the term is sometimes used in a loose and sometimes in a stricter signification, the idea of *duration* of greater or less extent is always implied in it. This appears from the subjects to which the word is applied, and the things with which it is contrasted. It also appears that the term is generally correctly translated in the Common Version, and also that the translators regarded the Saxon term *everlasting* as entirely synonymous, when applied to life and punishment, with the Latin term *eternal*. When the word *αἰώνιος*, or the corresponding Hebrew term עוֹלָם, is translated *everlasting* and *eternal* in the same verse, it was probably so rendered by King James's translators and their predecessors for the sake of euphony. Thus, in Jeremiah xxiii. 40, 'I will bring an *everlasting* reproach upon you, and a *perpetual* shame,' &c., the original for both words

is the same in both the Hebrew and Greek. If we supposed that any one, after examining the passages which we have adduced, could doubt whether the idea of duration belongs to *αἰώνιος*, as its constant signification, we might amply establish the opinion which we have maintained, by the etymology of the term, and by parallel expressions in the Scriptures."

In his translation of the New Testament,* in the Introduction to which he states his object to be to furnish a translation "more intelligible, more critically accurate, and, on the whole, even closer to the original than that of King James's translators," "guided by universally acknowledged principles of scientific interpretation, without regard to creed or church," Professor Noyes, the most eminent Biblical critic of the Unitarian denomination, and, indeed, of all American liberalists, affords very substantial support to the doctrine of endless punishment. The word *eternal*, which some modern liberalists have contended does not signify endlessness, is carefully avoided by Professor Noyes, and the stronger

* Published by American Unitarian Association, edition 1878.

term, *everlasting*, which plainly means unending duration, is used. He does this in sixty-six instances, in thirty-eight of which, in King James's Bible, it was rendered eternal. Twice only does Professor Noyes render αἰώνιος by the word *eternal* (Rom. xvi. 25; and Jude, 21); once, *from the most ancient times* (Titus i. 2); once *forever* (Philemon, 15). Even Matt. xxv. 46, which, for the sake of euphony or literary taste, has been varied by most translators, is rendered by Professor Noyes, "These will go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into everlasting life." These facts are of great significance, and show the weakness of Mr. Farrar's recent objection to the word everlasting, &c.

The word αἰών, over which there has been so much dispute by liberalists, is rendered by Professor Noyes *forever*, or *forever and ever*, in fifty-eight instances; in thirty-seven, applied to God or Christ; in eight, to heaven; and in four, to future misery.

Professor Nathaniel S. Folsom, late Professor in the Meadville (Unitarian) Theological Seminary, and an eminently critical scholar, in his

translation of the Four Gospels,* also quite uniformly rendered αἰών by the word *forever*. Mr. Leicester Ambrose Sawyer, another representative of the Liberal School in Theology, in his translation of the New Testament,† rendered this term, by the word *forever*, in fifty-four instances.

Dr. F. H. Hedge said : ‡

“ We attach little weight to the verbal criticisms on the word αἰώνιος. Granting what has been often alleged, that this word, in its strict and original import, is not equivalent to our word ‘*everlasting*,’ it is nevertheless probable that the New Testament writers connected the idea of endlessness with it.”

Such are the important concessions of “*Liberalists*,” that the theory of universal Restoration is not a doctrine of Revelation, fairly yielded by any just interpretation of the Holy Scriptures — a substantial vindication of “*Evangelical Theology*.”

* A. Williams & Co., Boston, 1869.

† John P. Jewett & Co., Boston, 1858.

‡ See article in the *Christian Examiner*, July, 1859, p. 120 — note.

But they nevertheless contend for the final recovery of all, as a just hypothesis, predicated upon philosophical reasonings in regard to the benevolence of God and "a fatality of goodness in man."

And yet even this hypothesis seems to fail to afford a secure resting-place.

IV.

**The Philosophical Hypothesis of Universal
Restoration, a Matter of Gravest Doubt,
conceded.**

Twelve Propositions.

Prop. 1. — Contradicted by Natural Religion.

Prop. 2. — Contradicted by the Weightiest Names.

Prop. 3. — Future Probation contrary to Analogy.

IV.

The Philosophical Hypothesis of Universal Restoration, a Matter of Gravest Doubt, conceded.

WE have now reached the heart of this great subject.

It is evident that the Philosophical Hypothesis of Universal Restoration must be predicated upon one or all of the following grounds:—

Historical testimony;

A second probation, with moral advantages;

“A fatality of goodness in human nature,” making ultimate self-recovery certain;

A restorative influence in penal sufferings;

The ultimate triumph of Almighty Love; or,

The ultimate triumph of Almighty Power.

But all these grounds of hope are rendered seriously improbable, delusive, and untrustworthy, by the weighty and effective concessions of

deeply reflective liberalists, presented under the following *twelve vital propositions*.

First, we have two propositions touching the question of historic testimony — or universal race truth.

Prop. 1. — The Doctrine of Universal Restoration contradicted by Natural Religion.

Dr. F. H. Hedge has said : *

"We must add, what seems to us of some moment, that this hypothesis is contradicted by the general voice of mankind. Not to speak of the Christian Scriptures and the Christian Church, all nations and religions hold the opinion of future endless retributions; all nations and religions divide the hereafter into heaven and hell, and contemplate permanent conditions in that antithesis. Hence the doctrine might seem to be an article of Natural Religion, that is, of primal revelation, of the unincarnated Word — 'the Light that lighteth all that come into the world.' For, if Natural Religion means anything, it means that."

* Christian Examiner, July, 1859, p. 105.

Prop. 2. — Universal Restoration opposed by the Weightiest Names in the Realm of Speculation.

Dr. F. H. Hedge has declared : *

“ Although, in a matter like this, individual authority is of little account, we cannot conceal from ourselves that the weightiest names in the realm of speculation, both within and without the Christian Church, are found on the side of eternal retributions. Of each of these classes suffice it to name one. Of ethnic sages our example shall be Plato, the supreme name in ancient philosophy. Plato, in the ‘*Gorgias*,’ delivers himself, through the mouth of Socrates, to this effect :

“ ‘It behooves that every one who suffers punishment, if justly punished by another, should either become better and be benefited, or should serve as an example to others, that others seeing him suffer the things which he suffers, and being afraid, may reform. Now there are some that are profited when punished, both by gods and by men ; these are such as have sinned with curable sins.† Nevertheless, by torments and

* Christian Examiner, July, 1859, pp. 105-107.

† ἱάσιμα ἁμαρτήματα.

sorrows cometh their benefit both here and in hell, for it is not possible otherwise to be freed from wickedness. But others have been wicked in the extreme, and on account of such wickedness are become incurable. Of these examples are made; they themselves are no longer benefited, being incurable, but others are benefited, seeing these suffer on account of their sin the greatest, the most afflictive and most terrible woes *eternally*,* being regularly fixed as examples there in the prison of hell, as shows and warnings to the wicked perpetually arriving.'†

"Our modern and Christian example shall be Leibnitz the optimist, an authority second to none in metaphysical profundity, or in logical acumen or conscientious love of truth. Optimism and eternal damnation are things hard to reconcile, but Leibnitz in the '*Théodicée*,' after glancing at the Universalist theory, proceeds to say:

"Holding, then, to the established doctrine that the number of human beings who are damned eternally will be incomparably greater

* τὸν αἰὶ χρόνον.

† Platonis Dialogi, ex Recensione Immanuel Bekker (Besolini, 1817), Part II. Vol. I. p. 167.

than that of the saved, it behooves us to say that the evil would still appear as almost nothing in comparison with the good, when we consider the veritable magnitude of the City of God. The ancients had narrow ideas of the works of God, and St. Augustine, through ignorance of modern discoveries, was sorely put to it when the problem was to excuse the prevalence of evil. It appeared to the ancients that our earth was the only inhabited sphere; they were even afraid of the antipodes. The rest of the world, according to them, consisted in some luminous globes and crystalline spheres. At the present day, whatever limits may be assigned or denied to the universe, we cannot overlook the fact that there are innumerable globes as large and larger than ours, which have as much right as that to be the abode of rational beings, although it does not follow that those beings are men. It is possible that all the suns are inhabited only by happy beings, and nothing obliges us to believe that there are many damned among them, since few examples or patterns will suffice for the use which the good may derive from the evil.'*

“ This reasoning, it must be confessed, is very weak, and altogether unworthy of such a mind.

Its fallacies are too obvious to need any comment from us. Nor need we stop to inquire how far Leibnitz was hampered by the wish to avoid controversy on secondary points with the theologians of his day, or what mental qualifications may have neutralized his exoteric admissions. We cite the passage only as showing that so resolute an optimist and so penetrating a thinker as Leibnitz believed the principle of eternal punishment, in some sense, to be compatible with the goodness of God and a best possible world. And this belief is more unequivocally expressed, as well as more ably vindicated, in another passage of the same work :

“There is, nevertheless, one species of justice, and a certain sort of rewards and punishments, which seems less applicable to those, if any such there be, who act from absolute necessity. It is that species of justice whose object is neither amendment nor example, nor even reparation. The only foundation of this justice is the fitness which demands a certain satisfaction, by way of expiation, for an evil act. The Socinians, Hobbes, and others, do not admit this punitive justice which is properly vindictive. . . . Nevertheless it is founded in a rela-

tion of fitness which contents, not only the offended party, but also the wise who behold it, as a beautiful music or a fine piece of architecture contents well-constituted minds. One may even say that it carries with it a certain indemnification to the mind, — that the disorder would offend if the punishment did not contribute to re-establish order.* Thus the pains of the damned continue then even, when they no longer serve to deter from evil.'”†

Prop. 3. — The Hypothesis of Future Probation contrary to Analogy.

Rev. J. C. Kimball,‡ while avowing a personal hope or belief that probation will continue into the future world, has nevertheless conceded that there are weighty considerations against it, which cannot be satisfactorily answered.

“Apart from its single terms, there is something in the earnestness with which it urges upon us the work of salvation, yea, something in the

* “Et on peut même dire qu’il y a ici un certain dédommagement de l’esprit, que le désordre offenserait si le châtiement ni contribuoit à rétablir l’ordre.”

† Théod., Partie II. 73, 74.

‡ Monthly Religious Magazine, April, 1867, pp. 288, 289.

very fact of the Bible itself, which is full of the profoundest meaning. God has dealt with man in those matters which pertain to his eternal welfare widely different from what he has in those which relate simply to his temporal prosperity. In the natural world, though he has stored it with blessings of every kind in the richest profusion, and is perfectly willing that his children should have them to the fullest extent, he has taken no pains to reveal their place and to urge them on their attention. Men were left to their own insight from the very beginning to discover those things which were needful for their health and strength and material growth. No decalogue of political economy has been written out on tablets of stone by the finger of God, no Saviour came down from heaven to show us the right way of statesmanship, no witness of miracles has been given to the great truths of philosophy. And there are many of the richest blessings in science and medicine and art, many that are now the most closely connected with our physical comfort and happiness, that lay for ages at the very feet of our race without even the faintest hint from heaven to show us where they were. But in

the world of religion, in those things which pertain to the health and salvation of the soul, he has not only given us a revelation of truth direct from heaven, but has taken every possible means to have it used. There is something almost startling in the urgency with which the Scriptures press upon us the use of our religious blessings. They warn, invite, persuade, command, beseech, exhort, and threaten. Every avenue of the soul, every passion and sentiment, and faculty, and aspiration, of our nature is appealed to, if, by any means, they may get us to accept the offers of mercy.

“What is the cause of the difference? Why does man have a Bible in religion any more than in science? Why is he not left to reach forth unto spiritual truths in the same way that he is to those of nature? Is it not because in the very beginning of life he has a special need of religious nurture — a need whose supply it will not do to put off to some other period of his existence? Would God have taken so much pains to reveal and urge upon him the means of salvation now, if, like the inventions and discoveries of art and science, it would have been just as well for him

to wait until he had groped into them himself? The very fact of a revelation, as bearing on this subject, is more than all its words. A person does not rush into a house and warn its occupants of danger, and urge them to escape, when a day or month hence will do just as well. There is something in that mighty *Now* which runs, as a deep undertone, through all the Bible, which is a terrible hint that the future will not be as the present; and when God breaks the great silence of eternity, and opens the way, and says, 'Come,' it must be, it is not safe for the soul to wait."

V.

The Philosophical Hypothesis, continued.



The Question of Self-recovery.

Prop. 4. — The Law of Obduracy adverse.

Prop. 5. — The Law of Habit adverse.

Prop. 6. — The Nature of Sin adverse.

Prop. 7. — Penal Sufferings not reformatory.

V.

The Philosophical Hypothesis, continued.

**Prop. 4. — The Law of Obduracy adverse to
Future Self-recovery.**

Rev. J. C. Kimball has said : *

“It is forgotten by those who consider that the work of salvation can be attended to in the future as well as in the present, that their natures do not, cannot remain in the same condition from day to day, but are so made as to grow, if not into virtue, then inevitably more and more into worldliness and vice. If the farmer waits till the middle of the summer before planting his seed, he not only finds that the season is less favorable for its germination, but that the very soil itself is in a worse condition to receive it. The weeds have been at work during every day and every hour that his own

* Monthly Religious Magazine, May, 1867, pp. 342, 343.

hands were idle. The ground is matted together with roots, and parched by the sun. The elements required for its nourishment have been sucked away, and the whole work of preparation is increased a hundred-fold.

"So with human nature. It is less and less adapted, with every year of neglect, to receive and nourish the seeds of virtue. Vices, whose germs were caught from the passing air,—who can tell where they came from, any more than what sows the myriad weeds of the field?—spring up in its soil. The freshness and wealth of feeling which belong to childhood are dried up. The roots of coarse and bitter passions thrud it through and through, and it is trodden down and hardened by the long tramp of a thousand worldly cares. Yea, it is a terrible fact that the higher and richer a man's opportunities are, the more hardening and deadening, if not improved aright, is their influence on the character. It is in the midst of Christian lands, in the full light of the Gospel, that we find the worst crimes, the most hardened, unrepentant criminals. The world has never had such irreversible sceptics and unbelievers as some of the men who stood

in the very presence of Christ, seeing his miracles, hearing with their own ears his words of wisdom. The souls which blaspheme against the Holy Ghost beyond all hope of forgiveness, are the ones which have had the Spirit of God come so near, so direct before them, as to be conscious of him as a living person. You cannot increase a sinner's means of salvation without increasing, at the same time and in the same things, his means of deeper damnation. The Gospel which is not a savor of life unto life, is, by its very nature, a savor of death unto death. And, unless the laws of man's being are entirely changed, increasing its opportunities, going to that world where it will know more of truth and duty, and the light of God's Spirit, instead of making the soul sure of repentance, may only furnish it with the means of being more sceptical, more flinty, more blaspheming."

Prop. 5. — The Law of Habit adverse to Future Self-recovery.

Dr. Orville Dewey* discoursed eloquently and forcibly concerning this power in human nature.

* Works, vol. ii. p. 82, &c.

"Habit is no slight bond. Slightly at first, and gently afterwards, may it have drawn its silken cords around us; but not so are its bonds to be cast from us; nor can they, like a green wither, be broken by one gigantic effort. No, the bonds of habit are chains and fetters that must be worn off. Through the long process of slow and imperceptible degrees, they must be severed with weariness, and galling and bitter anguish."

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"Every man will die very much as he lives: I mean, that in his character, his habits of feeling, he will. There is not this wide difference between the living world and the dying world which is generally supposed. Character, as I have contended, and as we all see, indeed, is not formed in a moment. It cannot, upon any known law or principle—it cannot, but in contradiction to every known law and principle, be changed in a moment. I say, therefore, and repeat the certain and solemn truth, that every man will die the same, essentially the same, that he has lived."

Again, he wrote: *

▪ Discourse on Delay in Religion.

“Why cannot the wicked man turn from his wicked way *now*? Why cannot the vicious man dash from his lips the deadly cup *this moment*? Why cannot the profane man cease to violate the sacred name of his Maker from henceforth? Why cannot the man who is delaying the great duty and interest of life begin a course of religious virtue and piety this very day, this very hour? Is it because his habits, his passions, his desires, are adverse? Without doubt this is the reason. Now in the name of all that is true and rational, let it be asked: Are these evil habits, and passions, and desires, to become more favorable to virtue and purity by *indulgence*? Is the veteran sinner more likely to turn than the stripping in vice? Is an aversion to religion, or to any part of it,—to prayer, to watchfulness, to strict virtue,—to be conciliated by being indulged and made habitual? Will you pamper the passions into self-denial? Will you exasperate an evil temper into gentleness and kindness? Will you throw up the reins to sin, under a notion that you may, by and by, more easily restrain it?”

We have only to consider this law of habit

projected into the future world, as Dr. Dewey clearly stated in a former paragraph, to see the improbability of future self-recovery from the dominion of sin.

Rev. J. C. Kimball * wrote:

"Apart from this hardening of the whole nature, which comes from the influences around it, there is still another bondage which it throws over the soul as it advances in life, and which tends yet more to limit its time of probation, — the terrible power of habit. We have some evidence, even in this world, of its insidious workings, its ever increasing strength, and of what its end at last may be in actually outgrowing all power of the will. How is it with the sinner as he advances in life? Is there anything in his actual course to indicate that, with sufficient length of days, he may outreach the dominion of evil, fag it out by the mere power of living? Do we find, as a matter of fact, that the older a person grows the more likely he is to repent? Is it not notorious, that the greater part of all conversions take place with the young, and that after a man has reached his fiftieth

* Monthly Religious Magazine, May, 1867, pp. 344, 345.

year, the chances that he will make any important changes in his life are all against him? And what reason is there for supposing that this tendency is to stop with death? Is there any power in the grave to wash out habits? If man is to carry the same good habits into the next world that he has in this, the same virtues and affections and upward tendencies, shall he not carry likewise the same bad ones? If every repetition of an act here renders it harder and harder to break away from its bondage, is there anything in human nature to make it different there? If the chances that a sinner will repent turn against him when he is fifty years old, is it likely they will be much in his favor when he is fifty thousand? Is it not probable, — yea, according to the laws of his very being, must it not be, — that the force of evil habit, growing stronger with the eternal years, will reach at last to every part of his nature, and be such that no effort of the will, even under all the motives that God can offer, will be able to break it? And what is this but arriving at the limit of probation?"

Prop. 6. — The Nature of Sin adverse to Future Self-recovery.

Rev. J. C. Kimball has said : *

"There is a point where the energy of nature, aided with all the power of will, is more than matched by that of disease, and beyond which no soul can go. You see it in bodily sickness. The violation of natural law — breathing impure air, eating unwholesome food, giving loose rein to appetite and passion — may be indulged in for weeks and months and years ; and yet, if a person then breaks off and obeys the law, and uses the right medicines, the wounds will heal over, and the body be restored to health. But there is a limit to this power of recuperation, varying with different persons, but which is fixed in all, and from beyond whose bourn no traveller has been able to return. If it is passed over, the seeds of disease are planted in the very vitals, and thence grow of themselves, for that seems to be the true nature of all disease, that of a vegetable growth, having a life independent of a proper vitality, predominating over and con-

* Monthly Religious Magazine, May, 1867, pp. 345-347.

suming the bodily powers. The use of medicine, the reformation of conduct, the obedience of laws, are then all in vain. The limit of probation is past. And though the body may linger along for a time, it grows weaker and weaker; and, in spite of longings and cries and prayers, it sinks at last into the grave.

“And is there not the strongest reason to believe that the same result is liable to take place with moral disease — with that which fastens on the soul? It is disobedience in the same way, only of spiritual laws. Is there not a point here, also, beyond which even the soul cannot go and live, — an abyss of sin so deep as to be beyond the reach even of God’s arm, — a vital point of the spirit where, if the disease is once seated, no entreaties, no truth is able to help it? There are some phenomena of sin which are absolutely horrible, more so than anything that was ever painted in the most lurid hell. When its fangs are once fastened thoroughly on the spirit, it seems, like bodily disease, to have a life of itself. It feeds, grows, unfolds itself, displays a will of its own, becomes a live, hissing, writhing serpent, not in the body, but in

the soul ; has a distinct individuality, so that we can say with Paul, 'It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' We do not wonder that evil has been personified as the Evil One. It is a subtle recognition in the human consciousness of its terrible nature, a truth about it which cannot be slurred over or reasoned down. And what hope is there when it has taken this form? Has not the soul reached its limits of probation? Could there be any more thorough handing over of itself to Satan?"

The editor of the Unitarian Review,* in a criticism on Rev. Joseph Cook's lecture on everlasting punishment, after objecting to his fundamental position, nevertheless made the following concession :

"It is true of men that he who commits sin is the slave of sin, and that all evil courses and choices tend to shut men up to certain consequences which limit freedom and destroy self-mastery, tending to induce insanity or impotence in the nature so vitiated and enslaved through the evil choice. This is so patent in sins of conduct ■■ to need no illustration, and there is much

* May, 1877, p. 551.

more than analogy to conclude it true also in the more subtle realm of temper and spiritual purpose."

Dr. Orville Dewey has presented another phase of this question, showing the terrible retributive influence of sin, blighting, distracting, crushing, and destroying the spiritual susceptibilities,—effects fatal to the hope of self-recovery. He said :*

"The retribution of guilt is serious in the contemplation, and must be severe in the endurance. *The penal suffering of a guilty mind, wherever and whenever it comes, must be great.* This, to me, is the first and clearest of all truths with regard to the punishment of sin. Even experience teaches us this; and Scripture, with many words of awful warning, confirms the darkest admonitions of experience. If sin is not repented of in this life, then its punishment must take place in a future world.

"Of the miseries of that future state, I do not need the idea of a direct infliction from God, to give me a fearful impression. Of all the unveiled horrors of that world, nothing seems so

* Dewey's *Controversial Discourses*, p. 106.

terrific as the self-inflicted torture of a guilty conscience. It will be enough to fill the measure of his woe, that the sinner shall be left to himself; that he shall be left to the natural consequences of his wickedness. In the Universe, there are no agents to work out the misery of the soul like its own fell passions; not the fire, the darkness, the flood, or the tempest. Nothing within the range of our conceptions can equal the dread silence of conscience, the calm desperation of remorse, the corroding of ungratified desire, the gnawing worm of envy, the bitter cup of disappointment, the blighting curse of hatred. *These, pushed to their extremity, may be enough to destroy the soul; as lesser sufferings, in this world, are sometimes found to destroy the reason.*

"If we should suppose a wicked man to live always on earth, and to proceed in his career of iniquity, adding sin to sin, arming conscience with new terrors, gathering and enhancing all horrible diseases and distempers, and increasing and accumulating the load of infamy and woe, this might give us some faint idea of the extent to which sin may go in another world."

Prop. 7. — The Hypothesis of a Restorative Influence in Penal Sufferings contrary to Plain Facts.

Rev. W. E. Channing, D. D., speaking upon the prevention of crime, said:

“Crime thrives under severe penalties; thieves, on the blood of offenders.”

Again he said:* “I have spoken of the pains and penalties of moral evil, or of moral evil in the world to come. How long they will endure I know not. Whether they will issue in the reformation and happiness of the sufferer, or will terminate in the extinction of his conscious being, is a question on which the Scripture throws no clear light.”

The editor of the *Monthly Religious Magazine*,† in an article upon “Universal Salvation,” said:

“Suffering has no intrinsic *regenerating* power; but its power may be and is corrective and reformatory. It may break men down into external obedience, and make their evils quiescent. Bar

* Works, 1872, vol. iv., p. 166.

† July, 1861, p. 6.

men here, at least unregenerate men, have their enjoyments, provided their passions are held in check, and they do no violence to the rights of others, but they cannot have the higher joys and the heavenly peace. The last results of punishment and suffering, in the long future, may be to bring evil beings into external conformity and such external privileges as they may be fitted to enjoy, while sin has forever closed the internal mind against the renewing grace and the bliss of angels."

Said Hon. Edmund Burke: "The infliction of penalty has no tendency to reform the guilty."

Rev. F. H. Hedge, D. D., in the article * already quoted, said:

"Adopting the modification with which the Universalist theory is commonly held, if we suppose that the fitness and capacity for happiness which exist not now will arrive hereafter, will arrive at all, that all souls are destined to eternal blessedness after such probation as each may require, we still stretch the right of conjecture. We suppose a remedial and restorative influence in the air of hell, or (lest the theological term

* Christian Examiner, July, 1859, pp. 104, 105.

should mislead) in the future transmundane penalties of sin which may possibly belong to them, but of which we know nothing, and which seems to be assumed for the sake of the argument. Our observation does not detect this medicinal quality in the penal sufferings of the present life. There is virtue in sorrow to educate and perfect the good, but none that we can see to reclaim the wicked. It does not appear that punishment in this world has always the effect, or has in the majority of cases the effect to reform the sinner; contrariwise, it is notorious that men continue to sin and suffer to the day of their death. What authority have we for supposing that this process is arrested hereafter, or for not supposing that the sinner will go on sinning and suffering everlastingly, or till evil becomes so predominant in the soul as utterly to quench its moral life, and conscious suffering ends in everlasting death? Who shall say that sin, once established, may not grow to be supreme and ineradicable, — that the habit of transgression contracted in this world and confirmed by every fresh transgression, may not become a necessity of nature, strong as fate and deep as life?

"Thus, in either of its species, — that of immediate emancipation from sin and suffering by death, or that of final restoration to holiness and happiness by remedial suffering, — the Universalist theory concerning the future destination of the soul is pure conjecture, undemonstrated, and incapable of demonstration."

VI.

The Philosophical Hypothesis, continued.

Prop. 8. — The Hypothesis of the Universal Triumph of Almighty Love ■■ Unwarranted Fancy.

Prop. 9. — The Hypothesis of the Universal Triumph of Almighty Power, impossible.

VI.

The Philosophical Hypothesis, continued.

Prop. 8. — The Hypothesis of the Universal Triumph of Almighty Love an Unwarranted Fancy.

MODERN Liberalists lay great stress upon this hypothesis, and, with much assurance, proclaim the assumption that Divine Love must ultimately triumph in the recovery of all souls. The following is a specimen of their way of pleading.

“ With reference to the possibility of any one going on in endless torments for sin, Mr. Maurice would say : I dare not, when I look at the frightful depravity of some men, I dare not say that their resistance to God will have any limit at all ; but do you not believe that God’s love is more powerful than man’s opposition ? We

know that man will be tormented as long as he is in opposition; but life in the next world will be a continual revelation to the human spirit, of man's state to himself, of God's will towards and power over him. But if I cannot set any limits to the depravity of man, how can you ask me to set any limits to the power of a love which wills all men to be saved, and which I am told is to subdue all things to itself?"*

The weakness of this assumption is shown by the following well-reasoned concessions of Rev. Drs. Hedge and Eliot.

Rev. F. H. Hedge said : † " It is a question on which sentiment and reason are divided. Feeling points in one direction, and — speaking for ourselves, we must say — speculation in another. Our heart is with the Universalists, but our reason is shocked by the violence of the hypotheses which Universalism — theologically ■■ well as philosophically — seems to necessitate. Theological Universalism supposes a too forcible interference of Almighty Love in the normal

■ "Thoughts for the Times." Sermons by Rev. H. R. Haweis. New York, 1872. (Holt & Williams.) p. 342.

† Christian Examiner, July, 1859, pp. 120, 121.

processes of the individual soul, bringing the Divine into self-collision. Philosophical Universalism assumes an inevitable triumph of self-recovery, — a fatality of goodness in man which seems to be based on no analysis of human nature, which certainly is not warranted by any mundane experience, and whose only voucher, so far as we can see, is a brave hope, which, however honorable to those who cherish it, is of no great use in the critical investigation of this subject. Theodore Parker, one of the ablest representatives of philosophic Universalism in this country, states the doctrine with his usual vigor, in his last Discourse: * ‘ But there is no spiritual death, — only partial numbness, never a stop to that higher life. The soul’s power of recovery from wickedness is infinite ; its time of healing is time without bounds. There is no limit to the *vis medicatrix* of the inner, the immortal man. To the body death is a finality: but the worst complication of personal wickedness is only one incident in the development of a man whose life is continuous, an infinite series of incidents all planned and watched over by Ab-

solute Love. . . . In all the family of God there is never a son of perdition.' This is fine, would the author but legitimate it by some demonstration of the grounds of his prophecy, besides general reference to the revelation of the 'Universe,' from which he would seem to have derived it. 'I think there is not in the Old Testament, or the New, a single word which tells this blessed truth, that penitence hereafter shall do any good. . . . But the UNIVERSE is Infinite Power and Infinite Love, time without bounds for the restoration of the fallen and the recovery of the wicked.' There are some to whom the very attractiveness of such a doctrine may seem a sufficient warrant of its truth. We have no wish to disturb their faith; but this ground of conviction, however influential in private experience, is hardly available at the bar of critical inquiry. And, again, the doctrine, as propounded by Parker, by Emerson, and others, assumes in the judgment of some the rank and claims of a philosophic intuition. It may be that, but we cannot help suspecting an intuition which arises, at this late time, in a field of inquiry explored for so many ages, and which

contradicts what the seers of all ages, with scarcely an exception, have seen and proclaimed."

Rev. Wm. G. Eliot, D. D., said : * " Although there are some hints given of a final restoration of all things, and although our belief in the paternal goodness of God seems to lead to the same result, yet there are obvious difficulties in the way. By the nature of the soul, its return to goodness must be voluntary. It cannot be compelled, even for its own benefit, without a destruction of its best capacities.

" The same voluntary resistance to God which is begun here, may therefore continue through unknown ages, and we have no right to expect that God will ever impose upon us a necessity of being good. It is therefore a fearful risk which we run, in suffering ourselves to become more and more hardened in sin. We do not know how far the capacity of goodness may die. We do not know but that we may separate ourselves so far from God, as to make our return impossible. Such thoughts are well calculated to awaken fear and trembling. The immortal soul is not to be trifled

■ " Doctrines of Christianity," published by American Unitarian Association, 1873, p. 166.

with, and those who bury it under sin are incurring a risk greater perhaps than we can understand."

In another place (page 164), after saying that there is a seeming inconsistency between endless retribution and the benevolence of God, he adds: "But on the other hand, we should remember that our knowledge of the Divine attributes, and of the real claims of justice and mercy, is very limited. God seeth not as man seeth, for he sees the whole and man only a part. It may therefore appear that many things which seem to us inconsistent with God's love, are in fact its most perfect exercise."

Prop. 9. — The Hypothesis of the Universal Triumph of Almighty Power, impossible.

Rev. M. J. Savage,* in replying to a Lecture on Endless Punishment, by Rev. Joseph Cook, said :

"All we liberalists of course will admit that laws broken bring of necessity their penalty, and

* Pastor of the Church of the Unity, Boston, Mass., in a discourse preached in Music Hall, May 29, 1877.

so long as the breaking of the laws so long the penalty must endure, whether it is one year, ten years, a thousand, or ten thousand, or ten million. Show that everlasting sin can be proved, then everlasting punishment will be proved." But he contends that men cannot perpetually resist God's love and power. He says: "God wills man's perfection. If he wills man's perfection, why then man will be perfect, or God cannot have his own way. Either God can or he cannot. If he desires to save men and cannot, he is not God. If he does not desire to save them while he can, he is not God."

Mr. Savage has thus stated a popular argument in its full force, although, as will soon appear, on the authority of Dr. Dewey, he has only borrowed from older and abler men, a syllogism whose fallacy has been often exposed. It suggests the old, old question of the origin of evil, under the administration of a Being of infinite goodness and power. If Divine power can prevent men from sinning and suffering eternally, and if Divine goodness guarantees the exercise of that Divine power to accomplish this end, why did not Divine power originally

prevent men from entering at all upon a state of sin and suffering? If *eternal* sin and suffering imply a limitation of Divine power and goodness, then the fact that all men are already in such a state implies such limitations. Thus applied, Mr. Savage's reasoning plainly impeaches the Divine perfections. But it is not our purpose to discuss the question: his brother "liberalists" shall answer him.

Dr. Orville Dewey says: *

"The position which I take — viz., that evil could not be prevented — implies no limitation of the Divine power or goodness. This idea of power, I conceive, is to be put out of the case altogether. Yet it has very closely adhered both to ancient and modern reasonings upon evil. Lactantius, in his treatise on the 'Wrath of God' (sec. 13), introduces the Epicureans as reasoning thus: 'Either God wills to remove evil, and cannot; or he can, and will not; or he cannot, and will not; or he can, and will. If he wills, and cannot, that is weakness. If he can, and will not, that is malignity. If he will not,

* "Lowell Lectures on the Problem of Human Destiny," 1864, p. 36, &c.

and cannot, that is a defect both of power and goodness. But if he can and will; then why is evil?' Or, to take a modern instance of the same kind of reasoning,—in Samuel Rogers' 'Table-Talk,' Mr. Rogers is quoted as saying: 'The three acutest men with whom I was ever acquainted, James Mackintosh, Malthus, and Bobus Smith, were all agreed that the attributes of the Deity must be in some way limited, else there would be no sin and misery.' And Leibnitz quotes Bayle to the same effect, in his preface to the '*Théodicée*.' Mr. Rogers and his friends thought, as I know from more private sources, that, as the limitation could not be of wisdom or goodness, it must be of power, *i. e.* of power to make the world otherwise. Now I must venture to say, that all this language, whether of Lactantius, or of Mr. Bayle, or of Mr. Rogers and his friends, very much surprises me. For the truth is, that power has nothing to do with the case. There are such things as inherent, intrinsic, *natural impossibilities*. It is impossible, for instance, that matter should exist without occupying space; and it is not so proper to say that God cannot make it so, as that the thing cannot be."

After illustrating this position by citing other natural impossibilities, Dr. Dewey proceeds to consider the problem of evil, natural and moral. In regard to the latter, he says :

"Was it possible to frame a nature, moral, finite, and free, and to exclude from it all liability to error, to sin? I answer that by the very terms of the statement it was just as impossible as to make two mountains without a valley ; or to make the angles of a triangle to be equal to three or four right angles. The very statement of the case excludes the possibility.

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"Aberration and failure, alas ! are, more or less, the story of every human life. Aberration and failure, too, are grievous sins : for this being had power — had freedom, that is to say, to choose the better part. The fact is so ; but the question is — was it possible to place him beyond the reach of this peril? If it were, then we are to find the origin of evil in the arbitrary and mysterious will of Heaven. But was it possible? Was it possible to make this being impeccable, incapable of evil, independent of temptation?

"What is the only conceivable condition on

which such a result can be secured? That man's will be bound, constrained, compelled to the right course. But then he is not free. Take away that perilous element, freedom, and then he may be safe; but *then* he is no longer a moral being."

The inference, then, is irresistible, that if all men are to be saved *in the future world*, by the arbitrary exercise of Divine power, they will not be saved as moral beings, but as "ignoble creatures, innocent sheep," and their future elysium will be only "an imaginary elysium of negative, stationary, choiceless, unprogressive innocence."

But other "liberal" writers shall speak on this question.

A writer in the *Christian Examiner* said: *

"We cannot imagine anything like compulsion in one mind acting upon another. We cannot *make* our child receive knowledge. We can use compulsion upon his body; we can bind him to his book; but it is evident that compulsion cannot reach the mind. The difficulty is that men have felt as if moral power were no power at all; as if to deny that God acts on

* July, 1830, pp. 397, 398.

men by compulsion, were the same thing as taking his sovereignty away. But our ideas of divine power should at least be borrowed from the highest human power we know. We accordingly find that the energy God exerts upon the human mind is different from that he exerts upon the senseless elements of nature. We find that in Christianity, called 'the power of God,' he employs argument, inducement, and persuasion, which, men are just beginning to discover, are the most stupendous force which can be brought to bear upon the mind, and yet exert no more compulsion to bend it in one direction or another than the moonlight shadow across the brook exerts to stop the flowing of the waters. We would speak reverently of the divine perfections. All we say is, that we can conceive of no power which can break up this order of nature; no power which can make him rest from labor, who has refused to labor; no power which can make him who has refused to be holy, enjoy that happiness which nothing but holiness brings. These things seem to be no subjects of power.

"Even if there were such a power, it would

prove nothing. It will readily be allowed that no one can be permanently happy without being good, but who ever heard of such a thing as compulsory goodness? It is plain that the only goodness which deserves the name must be wholly voluntary. It implies the choice and consent of our own hearts. Compulsion can only tie up the hands from offending, or peradventure force them to do distasteful duties. But to refrain or obey in this way, is neither a reasonable nor acceptable service; and exactly so far as constraint, or unworthy motives enter into our obedience, it loses its grace and value. Goodness in men is what they have made themselves, not what any power has made them. The power of God, Christianity, is one which we have full power to resist, if we will. The prize is offered, but never will be forced into our hands. If we cast it rudely away, the loss and guilt will be our own. If we make the preparation, we write our own names in the Book of Life, by the power which God has given.

“Some may look forward to another world for an opportunity of forming that character which they have refused or neglected to cultivate in

this. Still the Scriptures represent the future as a state of retribution. True, it is an awful thought that the consequences of our characters should endure through the ages of eternity, stretching out far beyond the grave. But they must endure so long as the characters remain the same; and difficult indeed will be the task to alter them, after we have here enjoyed the sunshine of God's goodness, which leads to repentance, in vain."

Dr. F. H. Hedge, while holding that there may be reformatations in the future world, nevertheless protests against the assumption of "Philosophical Universalism," that there will be a universal triumph of Almighty Power. He says: *

"But does it follow that all will be converted? that saving influences will act with compulsory force? that the soul, as such, is fatally bound and predetermined to goodness? that every Borgia is a Carlo Borromeo in eclipse, and every Brinvilliers an undeveloped Nightingale? Has this pleasant fancy any foundation but its own pleasantness, any authority but an undefined

* *Christian Examiner*, July, 1859, p. 122.

conception of the possibilities of Divine government? It is not a natural consequence, not a development according to cause and effect, but a monstrous accident, a wild interposition of juggling miracle, which we expect when we so dream. The most distinguished of American philanthropists, with large experience with human nature and reformatory discipline, expressed to us, in a recent conversation, the conviction that some natures are beyond the reach of moral influence — proof against all discipline — moral incurables. What reason to expect a moral revolution in such characters hereafter? If any derived from the nature of the human soul, let psychology declare it. The Divine mercy? It is easy to talk of Divine mercy, but the question is here of Divine power. The question is of possibility, whether Omnipotence itself can reform such characters without so violating their idiosyncrasy, without so traversing their normal developments, as in effect to destroy their identity, and whether it would not better comport with Divine economy to substitute at once another soul. A conversion which, instead of developing a native good, should impose a foreign

one, would not be a reformation, but a *metakinesis*, a transubstantiation. But we are supposing a case in which there is no good to be developed, if not a case of entire depravity—the existence of such cases may be denied,—yet a case in which the will is irrecoverably divorced from good and bent on evil. Schiller describes the hero of the 'Robbers' by saying that he would not pray, if once so resolved, though God should appeal to him in person with the offer of immediate heavenly bliss. We fancy this conceit expresses a possibility of human nature. We suspect that Milton's Satan is no vain imagination,—that the soul may arrive at a point of antagonism where the pride of selfhood shall resist all appeals, and a self-centered wilfulness shall say, 'Evil, be thou my good.' When that period is reached, we can see no remedy, no way of restoration that would not compromise the soul's integrity. Yet even those cases are scarcely more hopeless than those of weak and unstable souls, swift to repent, and equally swift to transgress anew, whose existence oscillates between contrition and indulgence. The moral influences which recoil from the solid re-

sistance of the former character, glide infructuous from the smooth facility of these.

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“God will have all men to be saved in the sense in which he wills that all fruit-germs shall become fruits, and all human embryos well-formed, healthy men and women. But this destination is not always accomplished; resistance or defect in the stuff, collision of forces, or what not, produces abortions in the one case; and defect or contradiction of the will may produce them in the other. The world of souls may have its failures as well as the world of forms.”

Seventeen years later, the same writer, in the *Unitarian Review*,* in an article on “Dualism and Optimism,” in which he contended for the latter as “the true solution of the problem of evil,” said:

“The time will never come when evil shall wholly cease from the earth, when all wrong shall be expunged, and suffering unknown, and

‘Fear and sin and grief expire,
Cast out by perfect love.’

■ December, 1876, p. 598.

Neither in this world nor in any future world is such a state possible. Evil there must always be."

Rev. H. W. Bellows, D. D., while cherishing the hope of the final recovery of all, has recently said : *

"Honoring moral, intellectual, and spiritual freedom, as we specially have done, we ought to be the last to expect, *at any stage of human existence*, any interference with them by the Divine Omnipotence, in order to force an unmoral happiness upon any of his spiritual offspring. We confess that our philosophy of man's perfect moral freedom casts very solemn and threatening shadows upon the future of wilful and impenitent transgressors. We do not see how men can be made holy against their wills, or be less than miserable, so long as they will not be holy ; and our observation and experience of human wilfulness in this world does not encourage us to hope that it may not continue for indefinite and practically dateless periods in new states of being. Fools alone make a mock at sin.

■ North American Review, March, 1878, pp. 336, 337.

“We have entered on immortal life already, in sharing the nature of our Creator, and are already under the operation and sway of the eternal laws that govern spirits in all conceivable worlds. There is much to awe and oppress us in the operation of eternal moral and spiritual laws, as we observe their working here; much in the government of the Divine Being, in spite of its general benignity, that is stern and uncompromising, judged by his providence over human souls in their earthly lot; and surely we cannot, with our reverence for the freedom of the will and the free play of spiritual laws, be among those who think moral evil, with its suffering and its penalties, will be forcibly terminated by ■ fiat of Divine benevolence at any future date.”

VII.

The Philosophical Hypothesis, concluded.



Prop. 10. — Restoration never to become a Fixed Doctrine of the Church.

Prop. 11. — THE FAILURE OF THE HYPOTHESIS; the Ultimate Condition of Incurrigible Souls.

Prop. 12. — THE FINAL CONCESSION.

VII.

The Philosophical Hypothesis, concluded.

Prop. 10.—Universal Restoration never to become a Fixed Doctrine of the Church.

AN anonymous writer in the *Christian Examiner* * said :

“Equally unwarranted, we think, is anybody’s affirmation that all lost spirits are to become angels of light. As if that were the only alternative that indicates the Divine Providence and government.

“That he will or can so completely *reverse* the voluntary life of lost souls as to make them an angelic order of intelligences, he has never told us, and we see no postulates from which to argue it. There may be forever orders of being and ranks of enjoyments based on the right use or the abuse of privileges.

* January, 1860, pp. 26, 27.

"When Christianity came, it lifted up the curtain, and showed us the solemn porches of eternity, and the abodes right and left into which they lead. Why did it not go farther, and show the endless landscapes beyond? For two reasons: man's vision could not take them in, and it would not benefit him if he could. Suppose it true, that somewhere in the eternal cycles all who have entered those solemn porches will become as angels. Is it not easy to see that, even if such were the truth, it is a truth which the world, as it now is, would pervert and abuse, — that bad men would fix the eye only on the consummation, though myriads of ages remote, and lose sight of the path that must guide them thither? Would not the revelation of it tend to remove the consummation farther off? Man, sinful as he is, would not be the keeper of such a truth without making it pander to his lusts."

The editor of the *Monthly Religious Magazine** uttered sentiments almost identical. While cherishing the idea of Universal Restoration as "one of the hopes of humanity," he concedes that it can never become "one of the dogmas of

* July, 1861, pp. 6, 7.

religion. Even if there be such a consummation away in the depths of eternity, how clear it must be that it could not be made the subject of an external Divine revelation to a fallen and sinful race! If it be a truth, it is the very one which the worst men would abuse and profane. . . . Suppose the consummation away in the eternal depths were depicted to a man burning in his lusts, and he were told, 'See, you are to have the happiness of angels.' How would the annunciation put that consummation farther off, or even render it impossible! How would the combat with evil be given over, in the supposed assurance that the result was established as God's decree! *In the very nature of things, therefore, the final salvation of all men can never become a fixed doctrine of the Church.*"

Prop. 11. — The Failure of the Hypothesis; the Revolting Ultimate Condition of Incorrigible Souls.

The editor of the Monthly Religious Magazine,* although holding that the final happiness and holiness of all rational beings is "a consumma-

* July, 1861, pp. 6, 7.

tion to be longed and prayed for," confesses the "absence of all revelation on the subject, and of any conclusions to which the reason is fairly entitled;" but he thinks that the assumption that there are only three possible alternations for the final condition of the incorrigibly wicked — endless misery, universal salvation, or annihilation — not well founded. He says: "The last results of punishment and suffering in the future may be to bring evil beings into external conformity with such external privileges as they may be fitted to enjoy, while sin has forever closed the internal mind against the renewing grace and the bliss of angels. It may be one of the terrible results of confirmed and persevering wickedness, that the transgressor is degraded to a lower plane of existence, and can only live there forever. There, when the long-suffering and agony have broken the power of evil, he may enjoy the pleasures he has chosen, but not the heaven, which he has rejected. All this is quite conceivable, while an impassable gulf yawns between those who have chosen to live for corruption and those who have chosen to live to the Divine glory."

Rev. Dr. Bartol, with characteristic power, vividly describes* the final condition of rebellious souls.

“The peculiarity in this Christian form of reward and retribution is, that it shows all the noble and worthy qualities as enlarging and preserving our being, and lifting it up into new measures of honor and durable joy; but sets forth all disloyalty as contracting the soul, letting down its stature, and consigning it at last, in a sort of mental consumption, poor and dim with fading consciousness, to hell, to waste away and perish with the dross and offscouring of the world.

“Hell is thus not so much torment as loss. It has torment for a warning; but, the warning being refused, the torment leads to and ends in privation of happiness and extinction of power. Compared with the infinite heaven, it is indeed but a petty cell, as the valley of Hinnom was to the huge swell of the earth. But let us not therefore imagine we can afford to smile at it or be inspired by it with no dread. It is large enough for our decay. There is room in it for

* Discourses on the Christian Body and Form, p. 297, &c.

death and annihilation of faculty. It has space to provide our souls a grave. It lacks not horrid chambers abundant to lodge all who wish to travel and take passage that way. If we let the spirit in us run into the excitement of unholy passions, into the ruin of falsehood and fraud, or into the slow and sure decline of selfishness; if the love of pleasure be suffered to infect us, or licentious profligacy to touch us with its plague; never doubt there will be verge enough in hell to receive and awfully secure us. A splendid palace goes down, in the fire, into a very little ashes; and dwelling and tower are by the stream swept out of human sight and admiration into irrecoverable wreck. In what small enclosures and imperceptible seclusions is the glory of the world buried! And, ah! how miserably will your heart, if you expose it to every flame of ungodly rage, and every disease of iniquitous habit, be trampled under foot and thrown carelessly away! and even the spiritual nature in you, with the costly structures that adorn the world, and the once proud, gay flesh of a hundred generations, sink and disappear.

"Then despise ye not, neither mock at the

strength and grasp of hell, though it be of such inferior dimensions to the mansions of heaven. Let it be no subject of thoughtless laughter and fearless ridicule, reduced, as it may be, from the portentous size which it once occupied in men's fancy, to a miserable keep of offenders and rebels, in a corner of the lordly castle of the world ; or transformed from a furnace or wheel of everlasting, immitigable torture, to a spot of mouldering and nothingness ; or appearing as the conflagration of abused abilities, shooting up but to cease. Think not lightly of a hell like this, even if you believe some germ of immortality will survive out of it unconsumed, or though you be convinced that God will finally rescue all his offspring into blessedness. To one aware of his relations to God ; of his capacity for holiness, and limitless spiritual unfolding ; of the individual or social destiny of the just and true and loving, — what idea can be more frightful than the blasting and failure of all this, through sloth and disobedience, into cold forgetfulness ! From what could a discerning spirit more convulsively shrink than from this fearful plunge into the drowning waters, to let the Lethe of

oblivion pass over all its finer feelings; or from the creeping of this deadly sleep, as over the traveller through the snows, to fasten on every gracious affection; and then to live on, if life continue, in dispossession of inward birthright, under a stupefying stricture of reason and the heart, with the mark of a diabolic seizure upon the richest revenue of the soul, deprived of the privileges of love and worship and holiness, bereft of what is manly, and kept a stranger to all that is divine; half — and, O! that far the better half — of our real property alienated, fenced off, and blotted out! Does anybody want a more dreadful idea of hell than that? From that will not every one flee for his life?"

Rev. Dr. Hedge, who has been freely quoted in these pages, one of the most eminent representatives of liberal sentiment, for intellectual penetration and breadth of culture unexcelled by any, near the close of a long and able article on "The Doctrine of Endless Punishment," reaches the conclusion* that "the difference between the wicked and the righteous consists not so much in the funded good or evil of their

* Christian Examiner, July, 1859, pp. 126, 127.

respective natures, as in the tendencies — good or evil — established in their wills,” which, “once established, will draw their subjects contrary ways, with progressive divergence, sundering souls, the good from the bad.” He then inquires:

“What, then, — we renew the question, — is the final destination of incorrigible and exceptional souls? Not endless torment, we fancy, but everlasting (spiritual) death, utter extinction of the moral life. All the analogies point to this conclusion, all true deductions from the moral nature confirm it; and, for those who demand the warrant of the letter, what conclusion more just to the letter of the Scripture, which declares that ‘sin when it is *finished* bringeth forth death’? Conscience (or self-consciousness) is the life-principle of moral natures. The tendency of sin is to weaken and corrupt, and finally to mortify and destroy, that principle. When, accordingly, the evil tendency exceeds a certain stage of development, the soul loses the power of self-recovery, and — the evil tendency still proceeding — arrives at last to rest in evil as its good, and to sin without compunction,

or any inward restraint or contradiction, (the stage of Devil-dom or 'Evil Spirits.')

Then — the evil tendency still proceeding — commences a process of mortification, which involves, as its final consummation, loss of consciousness; for consciousness supposes a capacity of distinguishing good and evil, and loss of voluntary power, for voluntary power involves also a moral element. Sin is then finished, and has brought forth death. The soul as a moral agent and a conscious individuality is extinct; as a *monad* it still survives. No longer a person, but a thing, its condition thenceforth is not a question of psychology, but of ontology. And here we dismiss it."

Here we have a *full concession* of the question.

What an appalling condition is that just described by Dr. Hedge! The writings of evangelical theologians will be searched in vain for more pungent and terrific portrayals, than those we have quoted from Rev. Messrs. Hedge, Sears, Eliot, Kimball, Dewey, and Bartol. And how striking the contrast between the utter ruin and wreck of the soul, so vividly described in this final concession of Dr. Hedge, and the state of im-

mortal life and blessedness triumphantly depicted in the following ecstatic lines of Wesley :

“ I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers ;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.”

Prop. 12. — THE FINAL CONCESSION: Fear, not Speculation, the greater Wisdom.

The following passage, from the pen of the eloquent Dr. Orville Dewey,* is very appropriate and instructive, at the close of our investigation.

“ The Scriptures reveal our future danger, whatever it be, for the purpose of alarming us ; and, therefore, to speculate on this subject, in order to lessen our fear of sinning, involves the greatest hazard and impiety. There is a high moral use, and it is the only use for which the awful revelation of ‘ the powers of the world to come ’ was intended, and most evidently and eminently fitted ; and that is, to awaken fear.

* *Controversial Discourses*, pp. 114-117

Whatever else the language in question means, it means this. About other topics relating to it, there may be questions ; about this, none at all. And after all that has been said, I shall not hesitate to add, that we are in no danger of really believing too much, or fearing too much. And this is my answer, if any should object to the moral tendency of the views that have been offered : I maintain that a man *should fear all that he can*, and I actually hold a belief that affords the fullest scope for such a feeling. It is not of so much consequence that any one should use fearful words on this subject, and even violently contend for them, as that he should himself fear and tremble.

"And I repeat, that there is reason. For if we adopt any opinion, short of the most blank and bald Universalism, it cannot fail to be serious. Will you embrace the idea of a literal destruction? Imagine, then, if possible, what it is to be no more forever! Look down into the abyss of dark and dismal annihilation. Think with yourself, what it would be, if all which you call yourself, your mind, your life, your cherished being, were to fall into the jaws of everlasting

death! There is something dreadful beyond utterance in the thought of annihilation; to go away from the abodes of life, to quit our hold of life and being itself; to be nothing — nothing, forever! while the glad universe should go on in its brightness and its glory, and myriads of beings should live and be happy; and all their dwellings, and all their worlds should be overspread with life and beauty and joy! Imagine it, if you can. Think, that the hour of last farewell to all this had come; think of the last moment, of the last act, of the last thought; and that thought annihilation! Oh! it would be enough to start with its energy your whole being into a new life; methinks you would spring with agony from the verge of the horrible abyss, and cry for life, for existence — though it were woe and torment! Shall we then prefer the hope of long remedial suffering? Then carry forward your thoughts to that dark world, where there shall be ‘no more sacrifice for sin,’ no more Savior to call and win us, no more mild and gentle methods of restoration; where sin must be purged from us, if at all, ‘so as by fire.’ Carry your thoughts to that dark struggle with the powers of retribution,

where every malignant and hateful passion will wage the fearful war against the soul ; where habit, too, will have bound and shackled the soul with its everlasting chains of darkness ; and its companions, fiends like itself, shall only urge it on to sin. When will the struggle cease ? If sin cannot be resisted now, in this world of means, and motives, and mercies, how shall it be resisted then ? When or how shall the miserable soul retrieve its steps ? From what depths of eternity shall it trace back its way of ages ? God only knows. To us it is not given. But we know that the retribution of a sinful soul is what we ought above all things to fear. For thus we are instructed : ' Fear not them that, after they have killed the body, have no more that they can do : but fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell : yea, I say unto you, fear him.' We know not what it is ; but we know that such terms and phrases as we read, — ' the wrath to come,' ' the worm that dieth not,' ' the fire that is not quenched,' ' the blackness of darkness,' ' the fiery indignation,' — that these words not only import what is fearful, but were *intended* to inspire a salutary dread. We

know not what it is ; but we have heard of one who lifted up his eyes being in torment, and saw the regions of the blessed afar off, and cried and said, ‘ Father Abraham, have mercy on me ! for I am tormented in this flame.’ We know not what it is ; but we know that the finger of inspiration has pointed awfully to that world of calamity. We know that inspired prophets and apostles, when the interposing veil has been, for a moment, drawn before them, have shuddered with horror at the spectacle. We know that the Almighty himself has gathered and accumulated all the images of earthly distress and ruin, not to show us what it is, but to warn us of what it may be ; that he has spread over this world the deep shadows of his displeasure, leaving nothing to be seen, and everything to be dreaded ! And thus has he taught us, what I would lay down as the moral of these observations, and of all my reflections on this subject, that *it is not our wisdom to speculate, but to fear.*”

INFERENCES.

333

INFERENCES.

THROUGHOUT this volume our “liberal” friends have done nearly all the talking. This has been the intention from the outset; and the book might now be closed, not inappropriately, without another word of ours: nevertheless a few observations may not be amiss.

1. A candid and discriminating review of the foregoing concessions will show, that those who have stood theoretically and ecclesiastically opposed to Orthodoxy have either squarely yielded the three most distinguishing doctrines of that system which have been under consideration, or have made free and generous declarations, in which the vital and underlying truths in these doctrines are substantially conceded, while they still cautiously hesitate to accept the technical formulas in which they are usually stated by evangelical divines. With many, it is the terminology of Orthodoxy that offends, rather than

its essential truths, — a virtual concession of the truth of the fundamental principles of evangelical theology.

2. We rejoice — not in a boastful, nor in a sectarian and controversial spirit, but in broad fellowship with the great brotherhood of Christian believers of every name — to discover how near to us, in doctrinal agreement and in the spirit of our common Savior and Lord, are the more spiritual minds in the liberal sects; and, as the result of our investigations, we are more than ever impressed with the importance of maintaining cordial relations with these earnest souls, honoring, instead of disparaging and discarding, their spiritual tendencies. In these days, however, when an accommodated, specious, and misleading phraseology abounds in the utterances of some eminent liberalists, careful discrimination will be necessary, lest we compromise fundamental truth; but mere technicalities and speculative inquiries, quietly and tentatively held, should not exclude from brotherly sympathy, those whose faith apprehends the same essentials of salvation which we cherish. Intellectual quibbles can neither shut nor open the

kingdom of God. Dogmas and ceremonies, so freely discarded and popularly denounced by illogical minds, are truly valuable, have important uses, and must everywhere and always coexist with the kingdom of God; but the constituent elements of this kingdom are "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Vital truth cherished and obeyed, and spiritual nearness to Him who is the centre and source of truth, are fundamental conditions inhering in the spiritual kingdom, mutually serving and conserving each other, and enkindling true fellowship among all earnest seekers after God.

3. That the fundamental truths of Orthodoxy peculiarly satisfy the deepest needs of the human soul, developing the richest religious experiences, and the most beautiful examples of purity, devotion, and self-sacrifice in practical life, is fully attested in many of the generous concessions on the foregoing pages. To such holy fruitage — the highest glory of the Church universal — have these candid and highly cultured minds borne witness, when, in the serener heights of true contemplation, they have freely declared, —

Of the doctrine of *Christ's Deity*, that "it is wonderfully sweet to the heart;" that "it somehow feeds the soul, and gives it the fullness of the Divine nature;" that "millions of beings are using it every day and find it gives them grandest health and strength;" that "it gives the soul a centre to all its aspirations and loves;" that it "has been the renewing power of Christianity, and wrought all the graces and the righteousness and the zeal and the piety distinctively Christian;" and that "it gives the Christian Church all the efficiency it has for positive good in society;" —

And, of the *Expiatory Atonement*, that "it affords a profounder peace to the heart," than "the moral influence scheme;" that "it becomes most natural and unquestionable in the purest and highest devotional moods;" that "it appeals to the deepest emotions;" that "any faith less comprehensive" "must ultimately prove unsatisfying to the mind;" that no other "scheme" "ever awakened in the human soul" "religious emotions so original, so strong and pure;" and that "the meanest souls, under the expiatory system," "are conscious of an experience no

others can know, and which language is too feeble to express ;” —

And, of the doctrine of *Endless Punishment*, that it gives a “background” of inexpressible worth to the moral world ; that it imparts “peculiar significance” to the “doctrine of expiation ;” that “it impressively sets forth the need of a Redeemer infinitely exalted above the range of mere humanity ;” that it inspires with a loftier joy those who are “confident that their names are written in the Book of Life ;” and that its denial is “a fatal element of weakness in the liberal bodies.”

4. The foregoing concessions also show that these fundamental doctrines of Orthodoxy have been widely held through long periods of time, and, in some important particulars, meet the conditions of universal truths.

As to *the Deity of Christ*, it is acknowledged, that “the soul is made, in its very nature, to want in its worship the whole circle of the Divine perfections ;” that the Trinity, “the chief point in which is the Deity of Christ,” “is one of the oldest doctrines of the Church ;” that “nine-tenths of the strongest and best Christians

that have ever lived have believed it ;" that "it is as prominent in all the light of modern science as in the darkest night of the Middle Ages ;" that "it is held by the whole Christian world, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic, except a mere handful of liberals, as the most vital part of its religious faith ;" and that "Jesus is the centre of the eternal religion of humanity."

As to the *Expiatory* Atonement, it is conceded that expiatory sacrifices have existed among all people, in all ages ; that "the principle of vicariousness, or the acceptance of the sufferings and death of the innocent in the place of the guilty," is undeniably "a wide-spread idea," bearing strong indications of being "founded upon what seems to be an elementary form of religious sentiment ;"* that "the various creeds which set forth peculiar theories of this sacrificial redemption are only light specific discussions of one grand uniform and unifying type ;"† and that "it is venerable for its age, and the long list of splendid minds which it has edu-

* Liberal Christian, July 29, 1871.

† Rev. T. Starr King's Discourse on the Expiatory System

cated, and which are still the ornaments of the Church.”*

And, as to the doctrine of *Endless Punishment*, it is admitted, that it is sustained by “the universal voice of mankind;” that, “not to speak of the Christian Church and the Christian Scriptures, all nations and religions hold the opinion of future endless retribution; all nations and religions divide the hereafter into heaven and hell, and contemplate permanent conditions in that antithesis;” that “the weightiest names in the realm of speculation, both within and without the Christian Church, are found on the side of eternal retributions;” and that to claim the universal triumph of Almighty Love, as an original intuition, is absurd, for “we cannot help suspecting an intuition which arises at this late time, in a field of inquiry explored for so many ages, and which contradicts what the seers of all ages, with scarcely an exception, have seen and proclaimed.”

5. Referring back to the fundamental thesis with which we started, and viewing these concessions in its light, we find that the three doc-

* Rev. T. Starr King's Discourse on the Expiatory System.

trines which have passed under review meet its conditions : — they are "great and wide-spread beliefs ;" "have been clung to and lived in through long series of years," "resisting all attacks ;" and "have been held, not only in the minds of scholars, but by the great common heart." They "must," therefore, "have their core in some precious and substantial elements of truth ;" and the "proof is absolute" "that the world needs them, and is better off with them," however defectively or erroneously stated sometimes, than with any doctrines that have been set up in opposition to them, and that liberalists "need to conquer to possess and not to destroy them."

6. We are, therefore, warranted in the conclusion that evangelical theology is impreguably founded in eternal truth, is fully vindicated by the moral attestations of the human soul, and is sustained by the deep spiritual satisfaction which it affords in personal experience. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel" — the constrained eulogium of the olden time — sends its reverberating echoes even to our day. We do not propose, therefore, to

abandon the goodly tabernacles of our faith. Our doctrines may undergo successive restatements — a necessity with all theories, from the progress of language, &c., — but the central principles, like their ever-enduring Author and Source, will outlive all fluctuations and mutations of human thought.



“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

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